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ABSTRACT

This proceedings contains 18 papers and presentations from the annual conference of the National Rural Education Association. The contents include: (1) "Strategies for Improving Math and Science Achievement in Rural Appalachia" (Hobart Harmon, Roy Blanton); (2) "Reform in One Community: Factors in Establishing a Firm Foundation" (Bernadette McCormack Musetti, Susan O'Hara, Elizabeth Gibson, Maureen McMahon); (3) "The Rural Learning Network: A Teaching and Learning Collaborative" (J. Richard Pomeroy); (4) "Women in the Rural Principalship" (Marilyn L. Grady, Kaye Peery, Bernita L. Krumm); (5) "Leadership for Increasing the Participation and Success of Students in High School Advanced Courses: Implications for Rural Educational Settings" (Betty Alford); (6) "The Operations of Kentucky Rural School Councils" (Feng S. Din); (7) "Perceived Leadership Practices of Rural Superintendents: Men and Women Who Lead" (Mike Boone); (8) "A Model for Rural School Consolidation: Making Sense of the Inevitable Result of School Reform" (Craig Cummins, Edward W. Chance, Carl Steinhoff); (9) "The Role of Rural Counselors: Their Needs and Challenges to Providing Prevention" (William Lee, Liza Nagel, David Scherer); (10) "Principals' Ability To Implement 'Best Practices' in Early Childhood" (Judy French, Sally Pena); (11) "The TeleLearning and Rural Education Centre: Macro and Micro Dimensions of Small School Research" (Ken Stevens, Dennis Mulcahy); (12) "Success of High-Risk Students after Completion of an Elementary School Intervention Program: A Longitudinal Study" (Marilyn Smith, George C. Hill, Marcia Bandera); (13) "Rural Education Reform: The Consultation Process" (Dennis M. Mulcahy); (14) "'There's Many a Slip between the Cup and the Lip'" (Barbara Kent Lawrence); (15) "One Teacher Primary Schools: England, Scotland and Wales, 1996-97" (Ivan Muse, Steve Hite, Ellen Powley); (16) "Great Expectations: Preparing Rural Youth for Future Community Vitality" (Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory); (17) "Adolescent Stress, Coping, and Academic Persistence in Rural Appalachia: The Unacknowledged Import of Early Adolescent Pregnancy" (Linda Lange, Robert Bickel); and (18) "Making Connections/Building Partnerships: Examples from the University of Maine" (Robert A. Cobb, Walter G. McIntire, Constance M. Perry, Russell J. Quaglia). Most papers contain references. (SV)

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The Many Faces of Rural Education

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The Many Faces of Rural Education

89th Annual NREA Convention

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Strategies for Improving Math and Science Achievement in Rural Appalachia

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STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING MATH AND SCIENCE ACHIEVEMENT IN RURAL APPALACHIA

Much of the education reform movement in the 1980s bypassed small schools and communities located in Rural America. By the late 1980s, however, rural schools began to receive attention. In 1987, Congress directed each of the regional educational laboratories to develop a "rural initiative." As a result of this action, in 1991 the U.S. Department of Education directed that the laboratories devote 25 percent of their effort to helping rural schools by fostering innovative rural education programs that promise to improve instruction, and by building the capacity of state and local educators to respond to the changing needs of rural students and communities. In essence, rural schools were on the road to reform (Lewis, 1992).

Appalachia, an impoverished area of the U.S. hoping to not repeat the status of being left behind a generation earlier in the creation of a modern interstate highway system, joined the education reform agenda. In his article "On the Road to Excellence in Education," Hoffman (1993) describes three of the 17 innovative educational programs funded by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) and the Southern Governors' Association. The projects were designed to meet at least one of the four National Education Goals important to ARC: school readiness, adult literacy and lifelong learning, math-science education, and dropout prevention.

Education reform in Appalachia, however, faces many challenges. The customary characteristics of small scale, isolation, and sparsity in rural school districts are difficult to overcome. The report "Education Reform in Rural Appalachia" (Brizius, J. A. , Foster, S. E. , & Patton, H. M., 1988) describes how rural schools in Appalachia face scarcity because of poverty, a weak tax base, and insufficient state and federal aid. The authors conclude that rural schools in Appalachia exhibit several characteristics that set them apart from other schools and that may influence the ways in which statewide reforms affect schools, students, and their rural communities. Rural schools of Appalachia, according to the report, are more influenced by the economic and cultural outlooks of their communities than other schools; they reflect and shape the economic and social stratification of their communities; they embody pride in values, including discipline and hard work; they serve as more than just classrooms, but also as cultural and social centers of small towns and rural life; and they are often the major link between the community and the world. The authors also reveal a major barrier to improving student achievement and school success:

> Perhaps the most profound scarcity in some rural communities is one of hope for economic renewal, rooted in the lack of concrete economic rewards for academic achievement. In

> some communities, the lack of a clear and compelling link between education and economic opportunity erodes the motivation of students and challenges the schools as they attempt to improve student performance and reduce dropout rates. (p. iv)

In an issue of the *Phi Delta Kappan* devoted to the theme of rural education, Seal and Harmon (1995) point out the realities of rural school reform in a state with all counties in Appalachia:

> The idea of making high fliers out of students who are low academic achievers living in places that are considered educationally and culturally deprived--such as rural Appalachia--warms the hearts of those who see education as the road to economic well-being for the nation. However, the education reform rhetoric that sounds so good from afar must be sold from the local courthouse steps and in the school auditorium to rural residents who distrust outsiders with big plans for making "deprived" people want to be "middle class." (p. 119)

The commitment to improve the mathematics and science of students in Appalachia has never been higher, perhaps because it has become increasingly clear that in an information age the future economic prosperity of the region and its people depends on the quality of education available and mastered--throughout one's lifetime. And mastery of high quality math and science leads the agenda of local education reform initiatives in many schools of Appalachia. Examples of initiatives include standards-based microscope lessons for middle school students (Bowman, 1996), student investigation of local environmental issues (Bousquet, 1993), "mountain science" for rural adults (Kimmons, 1995), hands-on science by museums that introduce students to science (Casto, 1994), mathematics activities manuals for students in grades 5-8 (Childers & Howley, 1993), and an early childhood teacher enhancement mathematics project funded by the National Science Foundation (Kwartler, 1993).

In 1994, the National Science Foundation (NSF) expanded its commitment to ensure all students have access to high quality standards-based math and science by creating a new rural initiative to complete its educational systemic reform trilogy. Joining the Statewide Systemic Initiatives and Urban Systemic Initiatives, the Rural Systemic Initiative (RSI) targets those regions of the nation that are characterized by low population density and high levels of economic poverty. The RSI is unique among the trilogy of educational systemic reform efforts in that the "regions" are not defined political geographic structures, but rather are determined by a collaborative effort of partners who share a vision of educational reform in school districts that have similar backgrounds and cultures and face common educational and economic barriers. NSF funded four Rural Systemic Initiative implementation projects in October 1995. One of these was the Appalachian Rural Systemic Initiative (ARSI).

This paper describes the ARSI approach and strategies for creating systemic reform in math and science and lists lessons learned from early implementation efforts. Suggested readings and selected web sites for rural educators conclude the paper.

ARSI: Briefly Described

The Appalachian Rural Systemic Initiative (ARSI) is a collaborative effort among six states in Central Appalachia – Kentucky, North Carolina, Ohio, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia – to stimulate sustainable systemic improvements in science, mathematics, and technology education for K-14 students. Its target region in those six states encompasses the 66 Appalachian counties that meet the criteria established by NSF for the Rural Systemic Initiatives program – Beale Codes 6-9 and at least 30 percent of school-age children living in poverty. These are distributed among the states as shown in the table below:

	KY	NC	OH	TN	VA	WV	TOTAL
ARSI counties	35	2	5	7	3	14	66
School districts	46	3	12	10	4	14	89
Schools	323	12	66	72	41	210	724
Teachers	4,786	295	764	1,679	1,219	4,124	12,867
Students	130,453	3,353	17,448	26,543	15,744	58,210	251,751

The principal goal of the Appalachian Rural Systemic Initiative is to accelerate performance in science, mathematics, and technology for all students in its target counties.

ARSI's Systemic Approach

Traditionally, educational reform has been pursued via three general strategies: fix the parts, fix the people, or fix the school (Sashkin and Egermeir, 1993). Systemic reform, by contrast, encompasses the need for coordinated change strategies, where attention is given simultaneously to issues of policy, resources, curriculum, instruction, assessment, professional development, equity and articulation – systemic factors that operate at the school level to impact learning environments. The approach during ARSI's implementation is systemic, involving changes in institutional roles and relationships that impact classroom instruction, policy-making, community involvement, and post-secondary transition. It builds upon existing reform initiatives and enlists the energies of local, state and regional partners – businesses, higher education, community groups, and public agencies. Such a range of stakeholders and participants is critical in achieving

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a balance of bottom-up and top-down strategies in which district and school-level leaders set directions and expectations; teachers use their experience, innovation, and commitment to create effective implementation; and external groups provide needed services and supports.

ARSI's systemic approach includes attention to realities of the Appalachian Region, including student access to equitable educational opportunities and delivery of a standards-based mathematics and science curriculum. The region is characterized by challenges that do not respect state boundaries. Geographic isolation, persistent poverty, low population density, underdeveloped infrastructure, and limited economic opportunities are common across the 233 Appalachian counties in the six states. The commonalities in the fundamental challenges facing education in Appalachian communities indicate the need for a coordinated regional approach, enabling the targeted counties to utilize the resources that exist in each state to support systemic reform.

The "bottom line" for the ARSI is improved performance in science and mathematics by all students. "Improved performance" means that students have acquired the scientific and mathematical knowledge, academic and technological skills, and "habits of mind" necessary to function as productive workers, contributing community members, and self-sufficient individuals, including the opportunity to pursue careers in math and science-based fields. The ARSI approach emphasizes that Appalachian students must achieve the same high standards and meet expectations being set forth for the nation as a whole. Professional standards for mathematics and science education produced by NCTM and NRC provide the national benchmarks against which curriculum, instruction, and assessment in American schools are evaluated. *The ARSI's challenge is to stimulate reform of the educational system in Appalachian school districts to produce a learning environment that expects and enables achievement of high standards by all students.*

Initial planning activities for the ARSI revealed improving mathematics and science achievement in the region would require the initiative to address need for a local vision; need for enhanced capacity; and need for access to resources, services and supports.

Many Appalachian schools and communities need assistance in developing a vision for mathematics and science. Such a vision might include: the importance of math and science to employability and economic growth; characteristics of math and science education; role of technology; and the nature of community involvement and support for schools.

Capacity is the key to sustaining systemic change. While pockets of innovation exist, Appalachia lacks the capacity to translate these isolated successes into regional impact. For example, data collected on planning the ARSI revealed less than 30% of teachers report having access to a curriculum consultant in math or science; 32% lack access to a staff member to help with technology; 47% lack equipment needed for hands-on learning; and 47% of school administrators report that their school lacks a plan for using technology in math and science. The region needs strong leadership and more local expertise to support desired changes in education

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and practices.

Appalachian counties also lack access to information and expertise that are readily available to suburban communities in the states. For example, 64% of teachers report that their instructional materials do not adequately reflect national standards; only 46% are comfortable using technology; and administrators report that professional development has not adequately addressed standards-based learning in math (32%) and science (46%). Access is needed to high quality learning resources; professional growth experiences; ongoing technical assistance and follow-up support; and models/exemplars of success.

ARSI Strategies

To address these needs, the ARSI plan is based on two fundamental strategies: (1) school and community-based action, and (2) technology as a tool for access.

School and community-based action. Assistance and support for Appalachian schools and communities must be based on locally-identified needs, rather than an external determination of problems. Rural communities are typically reluctant to follow outside persons or programs purporting to know how to "help" them. A key learning from the development process is that rural schools, while resource-poor in comparison with other schools, nevertheless can make significant impact on student learning by coordinating use of their resources toward strategically-identified problems. The ARSI utilizes local persons to lead local efforts – growing leaders from within the school and community in order to maintain local buy-in and sustain long-term efforts. At the community level, the ARSI links resources, people, and organizations in sustained collaboration to develop the vision, leadership, and commitment for school improvement. At the school level, the ARSI helps teachers and administrators develop the knowledge and skills needed to make sound decisions about curriculum, instruction, assessment, student placement, and other critical issues. At both levels, the focus is on increasing the mathematics and science performance of *all* students.

Technology as a tool for access. NSF and the U.S. Department of Education (1995) state that "the appropriate use of technology can improve teaching and instruction; expand and enrich learning opportunities; support systemic change; link schools and learning sites to the broader society; and provide equal access to educational opportunities." Moreover, "information technologies can provide tools that enable all learners, regardless of location and socioeconomic status, to access resources, information, experts, mentors, and colleagues." The rapidly-growing capabilities of high-speed networks and telecommunication systems give rural regions their first real potential to overcome the persistent isolation and lack of opportunity resulting from geography and poverty. The information highway is an equitable link to high quality curriculum resources; expert assistance; sharing of ideas among colleagues; and distance learning for classroom instruction and professional development. The six ARSI states are making significant investments in technology and many schools in the 66 eligible counties will have Internet access

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making a technology-based strategy feasible. Presence of technological capability in schools also opens possibilities for community development applications.

While these strategies are seen as the key leverage points for change, it must be noted that *systemic change in Appalachia is a long-term effort. Outcome measures of the ARSI implementation are necessarily intermediate in nature, demonstrating a trajectory toward long-term success.* The limited NSF/RSI funds are used to catalyze and leverage existing and new resources to support enhanced student educational opportunities and achievement in math and science.

ARSI Resource Collaboratives – Regional Support for Local Improvement

The concept of the ARSI Resource Collaborative is expressed in the conclusion of the Education Committee of the Kentucky Appalachian Task Force (1995) that Appalachia:

> ...needs a regionally specific education innovation center that works with, receives support from, but is administratively outside existing bureaucracies. The focus of the center would be on student programs, the professional development of teachers and other educators, and the integration of community . . . its activities would be spread throughout the region in all parts of the participating counties and not just 'population centers.' Activity would be student-centered and project-oriented. The center would be structured so as to be accountable to communities and in particular the children of our communities." (p.28)

The ARSI Resource Collaboratives--six now exist--represent a significant and ongoing mechanism through which educators and communities can access curricular and instructional resources, technical assistance, professional development, professional interactions, and other products, services, and supports. ARSI Collaboratives are a customer-driven *network of partners* whose mission is to empower educators and communities through coordinated access to physical, human, and organizational resources. Partners include key organizations and initiatives in a region, such as universities and community colleges, business and industry, federal and state agencies, NSF SSI and Teacher Enhancement projects, exemplary schools, and community development organizations.

Collaborative activities are divided into two major strands: Learning Support and Community Engagement. *Learning Support* functions of the Resource Collaborative are designed as "instructional partners" to enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning environments in ARSI-participating schools. They give teachers and students ready access to information, ideas, professional interactions, and technical support. Some Resource Collaborative activities are designed around common needs and operated for all teachers or students in the region; other activities are conducted in response to a specific need or request of a

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student, teacher, or administrator. In each case, the activities use Resource Collaborative partners to connect educators with the means to enhance student learning.

Resource Collaboratives engage in both development and outreach-and-support activities. *Development* activities involve identifying, compiling, and in some instances generating resource materials for quality math and science learning. The Collaborative Director identifies outstanding university faculty, teacher educators, and classroom teachers from among the partners, using their ideas and expertise to identify, adapt and develop needed materials. Using exemplary national curricula and electronic databases such as the Eisenhower National Clearinghouse, the Collaborative adapts proven resources to the contexts of rural schools in the ARSI states.

Outreach-and support activities provide learning opportunities for students and teachers, as well as ongoing support for educators as they improve their math and science programs. Some activities occur *on-site*, providing specific training, consultation, or follow-up support for implementing ideas. Other activities are conducted *regionally*, typically professional development institutes, with open access to educators in ARSI counties. Still other activities take place *on-line*, where teachers or students use Internet access to take part in learning activities, to exchange ideas, or to search for particular information or resources

A critical feature of the learning support function of each ARSI Resource Collaborative is its technology connection to the "information highway." Availability of instructional resources, professional development, technical assistance, and networking via the Internet is seen as a central strategy for providing rural schools with equitable access and opportunities to support change. A major focus for the first year of ARSI implementation was to assist counties in establishing that infrastructure through a combination of existing state efforts and pursuit of additional funding and support. Interim strategies, such as providing toll-free dial-up access and conducting more on-site consultations and trainings, will be utilized until the necessary connections are in place. Moreover, other classroom applications of technology, such as use of laboratory probes, simulation software, graphics calculators, videodiscs, and CD ROM, will be promoted through professional development and on-site follow-up assistance and support.

ARSI's implementation strategy includes the establishment of Resource Collaboratives at higher education institutions that develop an instructional partnership with math and science teachers. ARSI also provides funds to districts to release a math or science teacher half time to provide daily support for an entire school faculty. These ARSI Teacher Partners become the critical link between a vast awry of resources and change in classroom instruction.

ARSI Teacher Partners are released half time to assist math and science teachers in the transition to standards-based curriculum and assessment, and inquiry based instruction. These teachers meet with ARSI Resource Collaborative staff monthly to learn standards-based instructional techniques. Teacher Partners then provide school-based professional development and team teaching every day through the entire academic year. Teacher Partners are also the link between local, state, regional, and national resources specific to math and science instruction.

A special initiative of the ARSI, working through the Resource Collaboratives, is designed to enhance teaching and learning at *community colleges* in the region. Community colleges are a vital link between schools, communities, and employment opportunities in Appalachia. However, community college faculty are in need of training in instructional methods and course structures that promote success in a broader range of students. A highly successful teaching model, called The Excel Program, was developed at the University of Kentucky. Excel uses cooperative groups in problem-solving sessions to achieve successful student learning in mathematics and science, particularly among females and minorities. The Excel model will be disseminated through faculty training and financial support to enhance skills of community college instructors, as well as to provide a more effective learning environment in math and science for students entering post-secondary studies.

Community Engagement functions of the Resource Collaborative are designed to build community readiness and school leadership to support and sustain the implementation of quality science and math instruction. Based on information from the ARSI development period, Appalachian communities are generally supportive of their schools, but typically have not engaged in the dialogues needed to build a community vision of their schools and a true commitment to quality education. Nor have formal linkages been established to provide ongoing interactions between the school staff and stakeholders (parents, businesses, community agencies) in the community as a whole. As at the school level, the challenge is to build the vision, leadership, knowledge, skills, and resources to enable the community to make sound choices about its children's educational outcomes.

ARSI staff work with school district leadership and Resource Collaborate partners in the region to target schools with a high interest in engaging their communities in meaningful ways to support math and science achievement of students. All school districts in the 66 ARSI target counties are eligible to establish a school to receive ARSI assistance. ARSI staff assist the school in establishing a community engagement team, in selecting a team facilitator, and in carrying out activities and accessing resources to develop and implement an action plan. Each team completes an assessment of community resources and rates a set of indicators that allow the team to establish benchmarks regarding student achievement in math and science and related community support. Indicators include both those considered essential by NSF and those the team thinks appropriate on the school's and community's agenda for school improvement. Action plan activities target the indicators rated lowest by the team and/or focus on strategic opportunities available for the team to impact student achievement. Leadership and team building skills are offered for facilitators and team members through regional institutes. Lastly, the team periodically conducts a self-assessment of progress and measures success based on the established benchmarks.

Resource Collaboratives seek to connect the team to resource partners who can assist the team in implementing activities in the action plan. Facilitators are also connected electronically via Internet to share strategies for making the community engagement component successful. As the team strives to impact community involvement and student achievement in the school, district level leadership and ARSI staff begin concentrating on ways to scale-up the community

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engagement concept of ARSI to other schools in the district. Schools are mapped onto an ARSI community engagement wall chart for assessing scale-up and sustainability progress and potential in the school district. The targeted school for stimulating meaningful community engagement in the district may or may not be the same school that is receiving intense assistance from ARSI staff to implement the learning support component.

Catalyst Schools

ARSI's Resource Collaboratives carry out its strategic capacity building functions by working first in one school of a targeted school district--one that is considered "ready" to accept and implement the concept of systemic reform. This one school, called a "catalyst school," serves as the springboard for the reform process in the district by developing local leadership capacity and active community support, and by demonstrating the impact of a standards-based approach to learning science and mathematics.

During its first year, ARSI developed a framework to assist in determining districts' and schools' "readiness" to participate in ARSI local and regional initiatives. The framework focused on two factors as particularly important – level of technology implementation and availability of persons to support science, mathematics, and technology implementation. Based on information provided by the districts, ARSI personnel assessed the "readiness" of districts and schools. As a result, schools in 21 of the 66 ARSI counties were selected as "catalyst schools" to begin intensive local leadership and community engagement development. At the same time, a menu of diverse programs and services was identified to enhance the readiness status of other ARSI schools. These activities to be offered by the resource collaboratives include: assisting in development of school improvement and technology plans; providing training for local technology coordinators; writing grant proposals; conducting technology workshops for administrators; and offering resource awareness workshops, including information and hand-on opportunities to enable educators and community engagement team members to access resources via the ARSI webpage.

Catalyst schools contain several entities with which ARSI works in an ongoing manner. Each is critical to building the capacity of the local system to support and sustain implementation of equitable, standards-based mathematics and science.

- *Teacher Partner*. The designated Teacher Partner serves as a school-based instructional partner and resource person, with release time to engage in leadership development as well as to provide continuous, on-site support to colleagues at the school. Teacher Partners are not "trainers;" rather, they provide mentoring, resource awareness, and other assistance to classroom teachers working to change their instructional practices.

- *Technology Coordinator*. The school or district-based Technology Coordinator works with Resource Collaborative personnel to enhance the availability and use of technology in support of science and mathematics learning.

- *Community Engagement Team & Facilitator*. The Community Engagement Team is locally-identified, and consists of 6-10 parents, business persons, community representatives, teachers, and (in some cases) students. Led by a Community Engagement Facilitator, the team engages in activities to develop an action plan, to build understanding and support for quality mathematics and science among community members, and to continuously assess team results based on benchmarks set for indicators, as well as to foster increased community involvement in the school reform effort.

- *District Liaison*. The District Liaison is a person in the district office who is the key to scaling-up the impact of changes in the catalyst school to other schools in the district, through involvement in professional development planning, resource allocation, and curriculum/instruction support.

In essence, the catalyst schools, working closely with their respective regional resource collaborative, provide the laboratory in which ARSI works to build local capacity and to link local reform to regional and national resources. As their name implies, their development also catalyzes change throughout the school district, and is an important component of ARSI's strategy for scale-up.

Lessons Learned

We offer the following "lessons learned" from our experiences in implementing the ARSI, clearly recognizing the initiative is in early implementation stages. Such observations, however, may prove to be valuable for others who seek to implement systemic reform in rural communities.

1. Persistent efforts will be needed to ensure math and science is the main focus of the initiative, as the current excitement, advocacy and expectations among educators regarding technology may overshadow attention to other barriers to students taking and achieving in standards-based math and science.

2. Accountability demands on school system administrators for immediate results in student achievement will place enormous pressure on project personnel to delivery needed technical assistance to schools that exceeds initial capacity of the initiative.

3. Evaluation design and data collection strategies must begin during the planning stage of the initiative, and consider that rural schools have very limited capacity to handle "additional paper work."

4. Initiatives involving several states must seek a strategy that allows comparison of student achievement results in the region without expecting any state to add a new and different test to its state testing program.

5. The project director must diligently and continuously advocate a consistent vision and staff focus for effective implementation of a regional multi-state initiative.

6. School leaders with a negative attitude toward or past experiences in community involvement should not be expected to form a credible community engagement team.

7. Completing the community self-assessment profile, setting benchmarks by rating results indicators, and developing the action plan will be labor intensive and critical for measuring success of the community engagement strand of ARSI at the school level.

8. Resource Collaboratives must seek to meaningfully involve other regional educational service providers early after the collaborative is established.

9. Establishing Resource Collaboratives at a university can be a slow process.

10. Building school-level capacity for long-term change and sustainability through Resource Collaboratives connecting with Teacher Partners, Technology Coordinators, and Community Engagement Teams can intensely focus rural schools on student achievement and related instructional improvement challenges.

11. Applications of technology can address isolation of rural teachers but networking through technology must be facilitated initially on a regular basis.

12. Teacher Partners, linked to value-added resources on a well organized web site, can favorably impact instruction and enhance math and science teachers' transition to inquiry-based instructional practices aligned with standards-based curriculum frameworks.

13. Releasing a teacher half time can be an extremely efficient way to impact all teachers in a school across the entire curriculum for a full academic year.

14. "Success stories" and advocacy for the initiative will need to favorably impact a large percentage of educators, parents and community members before a school district leader can be expected to address changing policies and leveraging existing funds to support the project.

15. It takes "grassroots" involvement and support for maximizing the relevance of student achievement in math and science to local community and economic development.

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Web Sites for Rural Educators

Appalachian Rural Systemic Initiative (ARSI)	http://starbuck.ced.appstate.edu/arsi
National Science Foundation (NSF)	http://www.her.nsf.gov
Explorer	http://explorer.scrtec.org/explorer
Eisenhower National Clearinghouse (ENC) for Mathematics and Science	http://www.enc.org
The Rural Center at AEL	http://www.ael.org/rel/rural/index.htm
The Why Files	http://whyfiles.news.wisc.edu

Reform in One Community: Factors in Establishing a Firm Foundation

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Abstract

Year one of a three year university-school collaboration involving a community based, technology enhanced, integrated curriculum will be examined from the perspective of reform. The genesis of the reform effort as a collaboration, and how, why and to what extent this succeeded will be discussed in light of the rural and community nature of the effort. Some of the elements in the collaboration and reform which will be analyzed include teacher beliefs, communication, planning, teams, leadership, reciprocity, the community, and expertise. Discussion will focus on the community as facilitating and promoting the reform effort. A review of year one will be offered as well as a research agenda for year two.

Genesis of the Reform Effort

The purpose of this paper is to give an overview of an elementary/middle school-university collaborative effort with a focus on school reform. The effort is referred to as Project CREEK: Community Resources Through Environmental Education for Kids--a collaborative project between the University of Maryland, University of California, Davis and a large, rural, K-5 school in central California, and a sister site near Baltimore. The community in which the school is located is relatively small, agricultural, working class and forty percent Latino. Two-way immersion as well as bilingual classes are offered to students in grades K-4. Fifth grade is predominantly a transition year for Spanish speaking students.

The purpose of the researchers is to investigate the changes occurring in upper elementary/middle school classrooms as a result of the collaborative development and

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implementation of a technology-enhanced, interdisciplinary curriculum. The curricular themes center around locally relevant environmental issues and community resources, in particular the local watershed and creek. The project aims to forge partnerships among teachers, university education faculty, graduate education students, teacher preparation students, and local communities in order to fully explore the impact of the CREEK curriculum. Student centered goals include: To learn to make informed decisions about the community and local environmental issues, and to understand the role of individuals and communities in this process.

The teacher team includes a cohort of all five fifth grade teachers at the California site and another fifth grade teacher at the sister site. Teacher centered goals include:

- To learn about the local creek and generate a related realistic and usable curriculum with corresponding authentic assessments.
- To value student interests, needs and their everyday concepts (with special attention to those interests, needs, and everyday concepts of minority students).
- To understand how to use technology to maximize learning and maximize efficiency.
- To develop trust and team building.
- To link daily practices and information on the teaching/ learning process with relevant educational research.

The research team includes three graduate students and four university faculty from three institutions whose interests and expertise include science, math, language and literacy, social sciences, and environmental education. Each researcher has his/her own detailed agenda and goals, but all can be subsumed under the following:

- To explore the role of multiple technologies in instruction and learning.
- To explore how integrated education is developed and implemented.
- To explore the role of environment issues in learning and instruction.
- To explore the role of integration in the literacy of second language learners.
- To explore the perception and development of science, reading, math, social studies and the environment in integrated, technology enhanced learning and instruction.

Missing from this list is any mention of researchers and teachers working together to develop curriculum, team teach, or other forms of close collaboration or sharing of intellectual resources. The research design is one of no treatment or intervention from the research team to the teachers or schools. Rather, the role of the researchers on the project is to fully document and disseminate findings from the evolution of a technology enhanced, community-based, integrated curriculum and to facilitate only as requested by the teacher team. The research team was adamant about the need for teacher autonomy and the role of the researchers being to document the process and evolution of the reform work by the teachers. This "hands-off" design, like all research designs, comes with its share of limitations and frustrations. Taken to its extreme, even casually chatting with teachers could be considered an intervention, depending upon the content and context of the conversation. It was important to the research team to learn from the teachers and not attempt to impose some sort of transmission or other top down model (especially considering the inefficacy of this approach). Reciprocity, giving back from the researchers to the teachers, comes in the forms of information sharing and facilitation by way of providing financial, informational and community resources as requested and in so far as possible. For example, the research team has provided through grant money beginning, middle and end of year conferences for the entire team, retreats for teachers to plan and build curriculum, release time for teachers, technical expertise and information, for example, in-service workshops on riparian ecosystems. In the beginning, the role of grant money and technical expertise helped build motivation for teachers to be interested in the project. This is a legitimate and understandable position for the teachers who did not already have a close association with most of the researchers. However, after a year and despite numerous changes in the teacher team and to a lesser extent the researcher team, the relationships have strengthened and a shared purpose and commitment characterize the mutuality of the teams' efforts.

Accounting For Success

The research team documented all of the planning and implementation of the project by means of audio and videotape of integrated lessons, teacher and whole team meetings, retreats and conferences as well as teacher reflections and student focus groups, interviews and work products. In addition, ethnographic field notes were taken throughout the year in the fifth grade classrooms.

A year one retrospective reveals how, why and to what extent the collaborative reform effort could be considered successful in terms of its community and rural nature. It also reveals limitations and constraints. The fifth grade teacher team was approached by one of the lead researchers because of the degree to which they were already working as a team and their exemplary commitment to the school, the students, the community and one another. This is a significant factor in the successes of the curriculum reform. However, becoming involved in the research effort both forced and allowed this grade level collaboration to intensify.

The Teacher Team:

- *Expertise, Leadership & Planning*

During year one teachers chose to do two intensive integrated units, each lasting two weeks. During these units the grade level teachers worked as specialists, each developing an area of interest and expertise, and lessons consistent with the aligned grade level expectations/existing frameworks and the objectives of curriculum reform effort, project CREEK. Students then rotated through the five classroom stations, spending two days at each station. In this way teachers adjusted and perfected the lessons and activities as they learned what worked and what could be improved. Students came to know and experience all five fifth grade teachers and vice versa. Data reveal that both teachers and students came to see the entire grade level as one unit, rather than as individuals belonging to one particular class.

The evolution and implementation of the integrated curriculum is significant in that teachers were able to build upon interest, knowledge and resources available to them and develop units accordingly--for example, elaborate, extensive units on the local watershed, including trips to the creek and dam as well as basket making and weaving using local creek vegetation, guided by the teachings of the indigenous peoples of the region. In this way teachers allowed themselves autonomy and choices, but with the support of colleagues. Allowing teachers to build on their own interests and expertise seemed critical to the success of the curriculum reform effort because it made the seemingly huge undertaking more manageable and inherently interesting to those doing the curriculum development. Again, an organic, bottom up reform model appears effective.

There was no designated leader among the teachers, although, one teacher, more than the others seemed to be allowed the final decision in the case of differences of opinion. However, this same teacher advocated strongly for the team at the school, with the administration and in the community, including the local school board and was highly respected by teachers and parents. Year two, which has just begun at the time of this paper will prove interesting as this teacher has moved to another school district and a different teacher, the only male in the group, who is heavily involved in the local community, appears to have taken up the unofficial leadership of the team. In fact, of the original team of five teachers at the California site only two remain going into year two.

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Incredibly however, the newer teachers are committed to the CREEK project, possibly because it was presented to them as a quid pro quo of employment at that grade level and because they attended the end of year one research conference with the combined teams of teachers and researchers as well as a year two planning retreat for teachers. Those teachers that have moved to other schools have expressed a desire to remain involoved in some way.

Year one teachers choose to work as a team, as is evidenced by their occasional Friday after school get togethers and their before school breakfasts, which serve both social and work purposes. They also arrange to share duties and responsibilities in large and small ways--for example, to take one another's "time out" or makeup work students and to make extra copies for the entire grade level when needed, rather than for their own classes only. They also see themselves as a cohesive group and present themselves to others, including parents and the community in that way. On "back to school night" the fifth grade teachers first met parents as a group, discussing shared goals, objectives, and philosophies, rather than as separate classes, as is the norm. They held a fifth grade potluck dinner in January of the year, the purpose of which was to inform parents about key events that had taken place, including Project CREEK and to further enlist their support for upcoming events.

- *Communication*

Clearly, these teachers have a commitment to communicating with one another. The research project made this communication more accessible through setting up two electronic lists--one for teachers only and one for teachers and researchers. Teachers have agreed among themselves to read and respond to the messages on their list before school each morning. Researchers too have their own list, not accessible to teachers. Of course, individual teachers and researchers can and do email one another directly as well, in order to share information. The acknowledgment and provision for both in-group and across group communication has allowed teachers and researchers to communicate comfortably, effectively and efficiently. To date there have been no reports of being "burdened" by too many messages or enslaved to the technology in any way. One important caveat--this type of electronic communication requires that someone has the expertise and willingness to set up and teach if necessary this technology, and although minimal, it does require a commitment on the part of those involved to maintain such a system. Interestingly, there are those on both teams that fall all along the spectrum from very many to very few technical skills, but all have benefited from the ability to communicate electronically with colleagues.

- *Teacher Beliefs and Characteristics*

Teachers agreed to the project because of a desire to grow professionally and offer students an even more enriched schooling experience. They were committed to the three basic tenets of the project--technology enhanced, community-based, integrated learning. They also share an ability-centered perspective in terms of student potential and learning. The implications and consequences of this view of students are deep and numerous. Basically, teachers don't anticipate failure or disappointment by students and hence don't experience such. How this empowerment perspective is realized happens on a moment by moment basis in and out of the classroom. Teachers trust students and have high expectations of them; otherwise they would not take them to potentially dangerous places like the dam or the creek, to art museums or professional offices, as was the case during CREEK.

Integration of Subject Matter

During CREEK units teachers adopted a project approach to teaching and learning where there was an integration of subject matter across disciplines, allowing for deeper understanding and synthesis of concepts. This meant there was less of the usual daily designated math, language or science time. CREEK was all of these things, although different units were more focused on some skills than others. During Project CREEK students studied various units that involved going to the local creek, making animal tracks, gathering and recording data and classifying observations. Other units ranged from learning about light, optics and photography and touring the local dam to understanding Native American uses of creek plants through basket making. Students also did library research and wrote and illustrated the history of the creek using primary and secondary sources. They acted out a play with various "stakeholders" vying for creek resources and making recommendations for its use and management--i.e., farmers, fishermen, environmentalists, the government water resources board, and other community members.

Students were interviewed pre and post CREEK units on their attitudes toward science and what they liked and disliked most about science. Students overwhelmingly preferred CREEK units to the usual designated content area teaching, but interestingly didn't identify the science based CREEK activities as science, and therefore reported few changes in their attitudes toward science. Understandably, the integration blurred the disciplinary boundaries.

The integrated, hands-on, community based curriculum helped to contextualize concepts and language for all students and benefited bilingual students in particular through increased context embeddedness in very cognitively demanding activities. It should be noted that the two teachers with the bilingual students encouraged the students to utilize their Spanish proficiency, indeed, encouraging them with "Use Spanish if you can" while developing English proficiency. Bilingualism was esteemed by all fifth grade teachers (themselves bilingual) and seen as an asset, whereas monolingual students are designated in the administrative jargon of the school as "English only".

The success with which CREEK activities occurred and the degree to which the students enjoyed them reflects the strength of teacher beliefs in the benefit of this curriculum reform. Indeed these teachers believe strongly in an integrated curriculum and worked together to bring their vision to fruition. In addition they used their strong ties to community to further enhance this curriculum. Many props, experiments, field excursions, guest speakers, demonstrations and volunteering went into making these units maximally comprehensible and accessible to all students.

The Community Base

There is a strong sense of collaboration and responsibility instilled in the students by the teachers. This reflects the strong ties that exist in the school and larger community. Indeed many of the activities and units that were planned by the teachers during CREEK weeks would not have been possible except for the involvement and support of many community members. Many of the teachers have other roles in the community and therefore are closely connected to the greater community. The tours that students went on were often made possible by local people. The history of the area that was imparted to the students came from community members. Indeed it seems that the prior existing ties within this community made possible the ways in which these teachers worked as a team and managed to carry out so many different activities relating to the local area. Through enlisting the help of others, teachers strengthened community and administrative support for the project. Among those who helped on field excursions were the superintendent, the principal, the counselor and the resource specialist, as well as many parents. Even the parents of some teachers volunteered!

As mentioned, the science based activities were feasible not only because of parental involvement, but because of non-parent members of the community who were willing to participate. Tables 1 and 2 provide an outline of the various types of activities which served as the basis for the integrated curriculum being taught during each of the two units of instruction. In almost every instance there were community members involved in the instruction and/or guidance of the students through activities including the local dam tender, the town's optometrist, a local historian, the town librarian, a basket weaver and native history specialist, and many more. These people made it possible to provide the students with an integrated curriculum that was rich with knowledge and experiences that were relevant to them and their community. Relevancy is a key factor in motivating students to learn and to remember what they learn. Indeed many studies have shown shown the positive effect of learning in meaningful, socially organized contexts on student achievement and attitudes, (Bransford, 1983; Sherwood, 1987; Vanderbilt, 1990)

Rural students come from a tradition steeped in community involvement. The type of community involvement found in this particular program has served to reinforce that a sense of community is still very much alive and well in our education system, and plays a major role - particularly in rural schools. In many ways community involvement picks up where the education budget leaves off.

The Use of Technology in a Community-Based, Integrated Curriculum

One component of the curriculum reform was the introduction of the internet to the students. Most students in our study had not had prior experience with computers or the internet. Even those students who did have knowledge of what the internet was did not have access to it very often. This information was revealed in technology surveys given at the beginning of the year. We proposed that a study of the impact of the internet on student attitudes toward technology might provide valuable data on curriculum reform. It was hypothesized that internet access would have a strong impact on students from a rural school, allowing them to interact with environments other than their own. The internet provides students with access to real world, real time experiences and has the ability to incorporate their own enviroment into this experience, (Boone, 1997). Indeed at a conference held for teachers and researchers at the end of the year, the teachers commented on the success of this activity. In a sense the internet has the effect of taking a rural school out of "isolation" and into other communities around the world as well as fostering cultural literacy (Cummins & Sayers, 1995). An advantage of the internet is the opportunity that it provides students to work in a collaborative environment.

Over the period of five weeks 130 fifth grade children came to the computer lab at University of California at Davis. During a two hour session the students were lead on a guided exploration of web sites. The students first visited a web site from their own region and then looked up their residential address on an interactive map of their home town. Next they conducted their own search for information on a neighboring creek. Working in pairs, the students answered questions on worksheets as they visited the sites. After completing this guided exploration the students were allowed to visit some additional sites and choose from the following options: Bill Nye the Science Guy; Famous Hispanic Painters and the Whitehouse amongst others. Finally before the students left they were shown their own school site where they saw pictures of their teachers and of the "integrated curriculum project" activities. Observation of student behavior was conducted using video camera and field notes. Students also completed an attitude toward technology survey.

Preliminary analysis indicates that students exhibited increased motivation to time spent on task. Possibly this is due to the order in which the web sites were visited. Visiting their own environment first and then progressing to other sites such as the Whitehouse gave the students an idea of how expansive the internet is and how many different types of information are available on the web as well as demonstrating how their "world" is also a part of this. Indeed the highlight of the session was seeing their teachers and school on the big screen in the lab. Seeing this environment as part of this expansive network which contains information about places all over the world was very exciting for them. The technology surveys showed positive attitudes toward using the internet. They also indicated that each student seemed to be interested in one particular section of the exploration over all other parts. One of the main advantages of using the internet in instruction is the motivational factors of being able to combine real world, real time data with an extensive choice of data that is interesting to individual students.

Regardless of their level of experience with computers, students exhibited few signs of intimidation by the technology. Indeed observations indicate that interaction with the internet tends to further empowered students to want to utilize the technology, regardless of English language proficiency. Interestingly, when something "went wrong" the students attributed this to the technology, to the machines, rather than to their own inexperience or ineptness (more characteristic of adults interacting with technology). These finding are contrary to the belief held by many educators that students with little computer experience will find technology enhanced instruction to be a frustrating experience.

Conclusion:

In one way it is difficult to comment on the success of this curriculum reform as we are only one third way through the three year project. On the other hand, in measuring this success against what the teachers planned and what it means to have an integrated curriculum, it would seem that this was a successful year. The teachers in our study benefited in meeting their reform goals by having time, support and resources of many kinds, and each other. Much of the integration that occurred was more obvious to the researchers than to the teachers themselves. During a conference involving both researchers and teachers at the end of the year, the teachers were astonished at all they had achieved. Understandably, it was difficult for them to look at what was happening and reflect on it while they were planning and implementing it. Another important factor in the success of the effort was the ability of teachers to remain flexible and open to the many changes that inevitably came about, including those involving the team, facilities, administration and students. Despite these changes, teachers managed to support one another while remaining determined to carry out their mission. Continuity has been maintained to a degree because of the desire by several members of the original team who have moved sites, to stay in touch electronically and physically and even collaborate with the newly formed cohort of teachers. Students too reported a greater sense of community by having the entire fifth grade as their class. Many of the CREEK activities seemed to give students a strong sense of themselves and their local community and how that is a part of the larger world, important considerations for a rural community approaching the 21st century. The community was brought into the school and the school was out in the community in what is appropriate and effective pedagogy. In this way the school and the community have a reciprocal relationship.

The research agenda for year two is different for each researcher, although the overall research goal remains the same. The teachers plan to continue developing the integrated curriculum and implementing it. Technology will play a greater role this coming year than it has before and the research team will continue to document the process and disseminate the findings.

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The Rural Learning Network:
A Teaching and Learning Collaborative

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As the acquisition of technology tools becomes more common place among all schools, it is time to create opportunities for the technologies to mature into quality tools for instruction and learning. Teachers and students in rural schools often do not have the human or financial resources to avail themselves of all that technology has to offer. In a collaborative effort, five schools ranging from the foothills of the Sierras to the farmlands of California's Central Valley have joined together in conjunction with UCD to study the creation of a Rural Learning Network. This network could offer email communications possibilities between teachers who may share common interests, work group links between classrooms at similar grade levels, curriculum development opportunities between inservice and preservice teachers, access to on-line libraries and educational resources, a gateway to the Internet, and a support system for extending the educational horizons of rural teachers and students who are often isolated because of geography. Geographical distances and boundaries all but disappear as teachers and students make friends and colleagues while building educational bridges across the miles.

History

In the Spring of 1994, supported by grants from Apple Computer, Inc. The University of California, Davis (UCD) , Camptonville Union Elementary School District (CUES), and Yolo County Court and Community Schools (YCCCS) entered into a partnership to integrate the use of computer based technology in a study of environmental issues in the Sierra Nevada foothills and the Cache Creek Drainage. These projects attempted to connect students from small rural or isolated schools with student teachers and faculty at UCD. Under the original grants, Apple ® supplied hardware, software, and the extensive staff training required to integrate the use of computer based technology in student centered learning to the teachers at CUES and YCCCS.

Upon completion of the Apple grant projects, it was obvious that developing better electronic communications was a key to facilitating continued collaboration amongst isolated rural schools and UCD. As a result of this finding, the goal of the partnership shifted from environmental studies to the development of a dedicated network amongst teachers and students in these isolated schools.

Many of the teachers involved in these initial projects identified professional isolation as a significant draw back to their successful use of technology in the curriculum and to an understanding of how others dealt with everyday educational issues in general Many felt that they lacked opportunities to communicate with peers, chances to offer and receive collegial support, and opportunities to share and compare the work of their students with others at the same grade level. What was lacking was the type of communication that occurs in a faculty room or lounge. Teachers also expressed a concern about the social isolation of their students who often had lived their entire lives without exposure to children and or adults from outside their communities. From these initial concerns, the idea of the Rural Learning Network, functioning as a virtual faculty room, arose.

Purpose

The goal of the Rural Learning Network (RLN) was to provide a virtual community for teachers and students from isolated communities where ideas could be exchanged and collaboration could flourish. In addition, an opportunity for preservice teachers to experience the unique educational environment of small rural schools was an option lacking in the existing credential program. Developing a virtual community amongst students, teachers, university faculty and preservice teachers would serve as a way to discuss and explore many educational issues.

Initially funded under a planning grant from the Cooperative Research and Extension Services for Schools (CRESS) Center, the goals for the RLN were:

- Provide a method for teachers, students, university faculty and preservice teachers to collaborate through electronic communication.
- Provide a method for teachers to share student work through on-line resources.
- Introduce preservice teachers to the rich depth of curriculum integration and teaching techniques in use at rural schools.
- Provide teachers in isolated schools an opportunity to conduct action research on the use of technology in their own classrooms.

After completing the planning phase of the grant, a CRESS implementation grant was obtained to provide two year funding to implement the RLN. Funds were used to

- Employ a list manager to maintain email lists, update addresses, archive messages, and initial conversations amongst participants by posting regular questions or ideas.
- Support travel to the various sites to provide staff training and hardware support
- provide substitute teacher release time and travel expenses for annual participant meetings in the Spring
- Off set copy costs and to support teacher's action research projects.

Participants

Participating teachers were initially drawn from the two schools which had participated in the Apple grants. In addition, two schools from the rural central valley and a second school from the Sierra Foothills were invited to participate. The additional schools either had a previous association with UC Davis through research projects, had served as sites for preservice teacher placements, were schools where teachers had been members of the initial grants but had changed teaching locations, or schools with new teachers who had previously been part of the Apple grants projects while enrolled in the UC Davis credential program.

Teachers at each site initially agreed to participate in the project for a period of two years during which time they would participate in on line conversations, share student work, and conduct individual teacher research projects about their use of technology in the classroom. The university participants agreed to connect preservice teachers to students through electronic mail much like pen pals, offer staff training where needed, provide content support for teachers on issues related to teaching, curriculum, and environmental studies, link preservice teachers to inservice teachers for collaboration on curriculum development, and organize yearly meetings where all participants could meet face to face to discuss their progress. A summary of the participating schools is shown in the chart below. Each site was unique in its access to electronic communications, access to hardware, levels of teacher training, and environmental setting.

School	Location	Grades	Participants	Technology Resources
Camptonville Elementary (CUES)	Sierra Foothills	5-8	40 students 3 teachers 1 tech specialist	6-8 computers per classroom provided by Apple Grant
Cache Creek High School (CCHS)	Rural Central Valley	9-12	20 students 1 teacher	6-8 computers per classroom provided by Apple Grant
Waggoner Elementary School (WES)	Rural Central Valley	5	150 students 5 teachers	No computers in classrooms, no access at school
Winters Middle School (WMS)	Rural Central Valley	7-8	150 students 1 teacher	One computer per classroom, new teacher trained at UCD
Yuba Feather School (YFS)	Sierra Foothills	8	30 students 1 teacher 1 administrator	10-12 Computers per room for participating teacher. No training
UC Davis Division of Education (UCD)	Central Valley	Preservice Teachers and Education Faculty	16 preservice 3 faculty	Each participant had regular access to computers either at home or at school. Training in methods classes

Activities

Year 1- Planning 1995-1996

1. Planning meeting held at the university campus as well as at each participant site to plan for and develop a framework for the RLN. (March 1996)

2. Training in electronic communications, software utilization, and hardware solutions was provided for all school sites by university participants. (March 1996-June 1996)
3. Preservice teachers from UCD traveled to the remote sites to meet students and teachers, discuss curriculum directions. (Winter 1996)
4. Working in cross disciplinary teams, preservice teachers from Language Arts and Science collaborated with rural teachers to create integrated multi media lessons applicable to the teacher's curriculum. (January 1996-June 1996)
5. Hardware was loaned and installed at the rural sites if needed to facilitate communications. (January 1996-June 1997)

Year 2- Implementation 1996-1997

1. Grant funded by CRESS for a two year project
2. Initial meeting with all participants to plan activities, establish communications expectations, facilitate hardware solutions, and train staff in communications techniques. (September 1996)
3. Creation of ListServe for all participants. (September 1996 -October 1996)
4. Regular electronic messages were posted to the list by list manager (September 1996-April 1997)
    a. Biographies submitted by all participants
    b. Topical Questions
    c. Teacher requests for assistance or support
    d. Referrals or requests from participants
5. Site teachers conducted action research on their use of technology. (January 1997-June 1997)
6. Continued email between students and preservice teachers.
7. High Speed access (ISDN) communications installed in each foothill school. (January 1997 -March 1997)

8. Spring meeting with all RLN participants. (March 1997)

Results

Year One- Planning

As a result of the work done in the planning grant, each of the five partner schools and UCD were connected electronically for email and sharing of student work. In addition, each site established, at a minimum, modem access to Internet resources. During the first year, UCD staff provided training on email and Internet for interested teachers at each site. Inter disciplinary teams of preservice teachers communicated with teachers at the partner sites and developed lessons related to the grade level curriculum topics which integrated science and language arts. Planning for these projects was initiated by site visits bringing together the students and inservice teachers with the preservice teachers. During the visits, preservice teachers became aware of the curriculum topics to be covered by the lessons and the level of student work. It was anticipated that email during the year would allow the inservice and preservice teachers to collaborate on the development of these lessons. This email communication was difficult to accomplish and eventually the preservice teachers completed the lessons without additional communication from the teachers. As an off shoot of the RLN, the Fifth grade teachers at Waggoner Elementary School develop their own electronic network to facilitate their work with students. Using this small school wide network, teachers at Waggoner communicated readily with each other posting a large number of messages to their list serve.

Year Two-Implementation

Results for year two focus on the four major goals of the RLN project.

1. Lines of electronic communications were established initially between all partner sites. Analysis of the numbers of postings shows that all sites did not participate equally. In two cases, CCHS and WMS, very little communication took place other than brief messages at the start of the year in response to the list serve

managers' request for biographies of all participants. Three partner schools and UCD did continue to have varied levels of communications. Waggoner Elementary School (WES) posted the largest number of messages (94) followed by Camptonville (39) and Yuba Feather School (20). Some student teachers participated but year end interviews revealed that most student teachers lacked the time or access opportunities that were initially anticipated for their participation. Of the 16 preservice teachers involved in the UCD program only 4 actually exchanged messages. These were the only messages exchanged between rural students and the University.

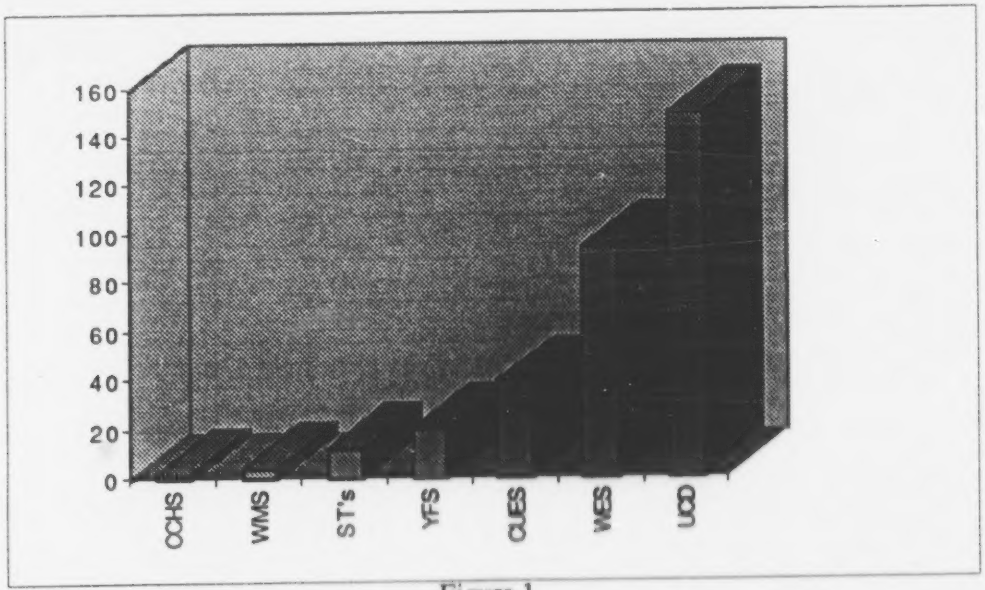

Figure 1

Analysis of the messages reveals that most sites participated in response to specific questions asked by the list serve manager or other events The evidence for this is revealed in the data which shows all sites participating in September in response to the start up messages and requests for biographical information about the participants. In addition, there is an overall increase in participation in March in response to issues raised at the Spring meeting. In addition, graphical analysis reveals posting activity from the preservice teachers and CUES teachers in

November after questions from YFS in October. WES then responded to those postings in January.

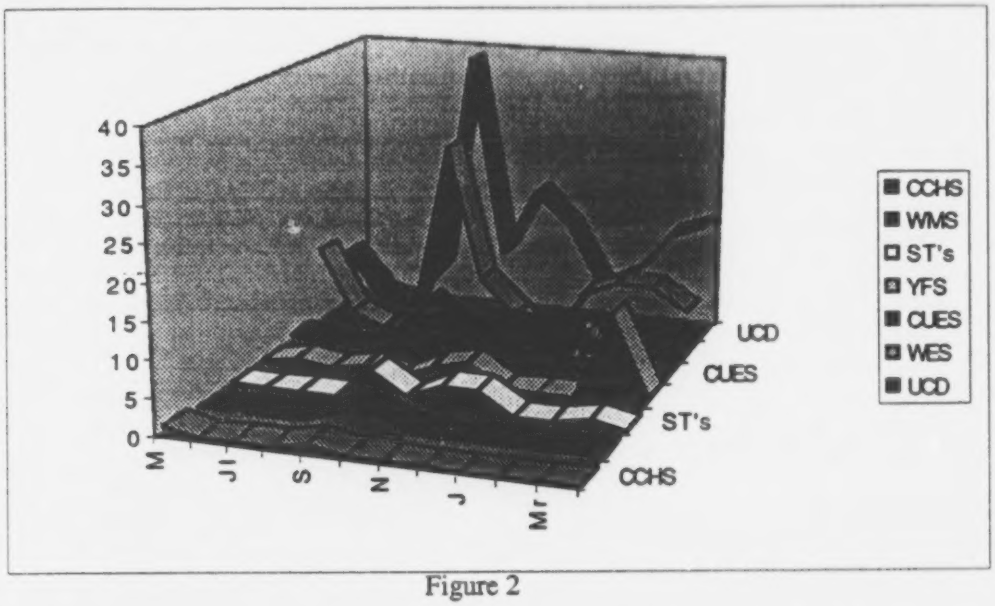

Figure 2

Additional analysis of the types of messages sent indicates that Social (biographical responses, conversations about likes and dislikes and casual responses to comments) represented about one third of all the messages exchanged however informational postings (requests for assistance, response to requests, referrals to Internet sites, and how to information) represented one half of all the postings and administrative messages (requests for biographies, notices about system status and infrastructure messages) were only about one sixth of the postings. (Figure 3)

Further analysis of the types of postings by month reveals that social messages were at their most frequent in September and then trailed off until the end of year two whereas informational postings showed a continuous rise from December to April. (Figure 4)

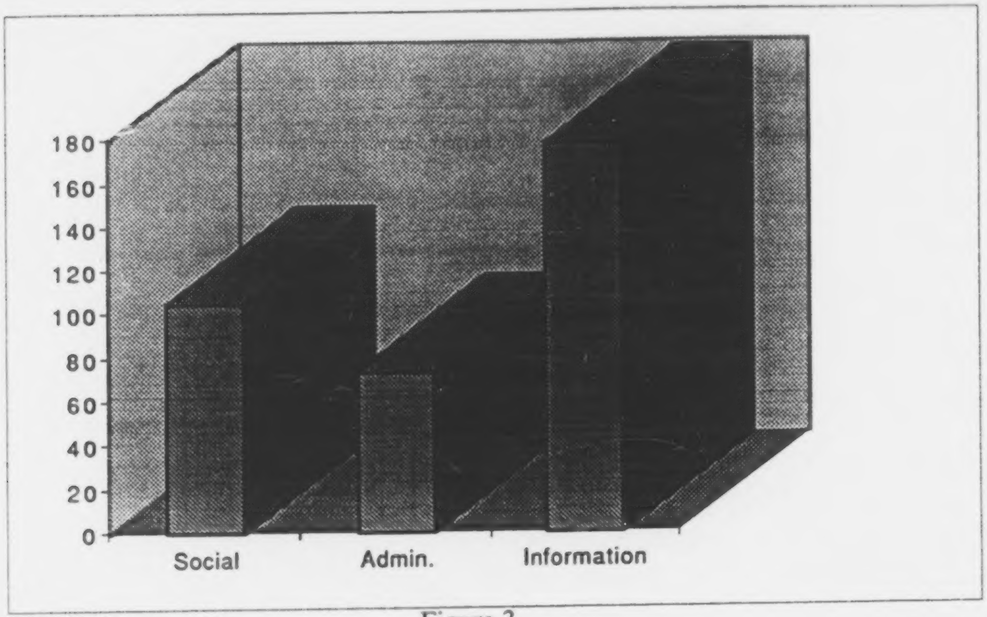

Figure 3

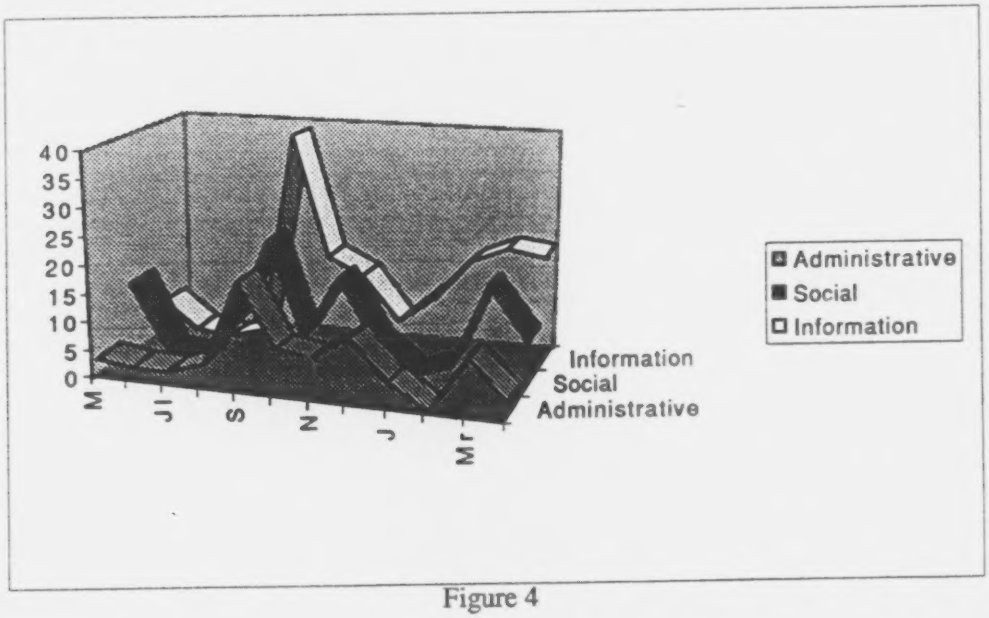

Figure 4

2. By the end of year two, no participants had shared student work on the RLN.

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3. During the planning year, preservice teachers made multiple attempts to contact and collaborate with inservice teachers at the rural sites with poor results. In exit interviews at the end of year one, preservice teachers unanimously commented that they had made multiple efforts to contact teachers with very poor results. Without the types of collaboration that were anticipated, preservice teachers continued to work on their integrated curriculum projects but without the inservice teachers input. During year two, the nature of the anticipated interaction between the preservice teachers and inservice teachers changed to a more collegial and mentoring format. Preservice teachers were encouraged to submit resource, how to , and curriculum questions to the RLN as well as to the university supervisor with the hope that inservice teachers would share their experiences. This type of interaction occurred in every case. A review of the messages sent by preservice teachers and responded to showed approximately 3 response per request, usually from a variety of sites and or teachers. No record was kept of individual responses preservice teachers received which did not go through the RLN List serve.

4. Teachers and technology specialists at three sites conducted teacher research projects. One project consisted of a journal about teaching staff to use technology in the classroom. Review of the journal is ongoing with completion expected during year 3 or the project. Another teacher had students document their use of Internet resources including time spent searching vs. time spent utilizing found resources, attitudes about use of technology for school projects and reflections on the value of the electronic resources for each project. The third project documented the creation of a school local area network (LAN) and how it impacted student technology use. This is a two year project and should be completed in year three.

Year Three-Proposed

Based on the findings of Year two, several proposals have been made to increase the use of the RLN and to utilize it's unique resources.

1. A new technology grant is sought by a consortium of year two schools plus two new schools. The two new schools added to the RLN represent schools where previous year two participants are now teaching or which are rural and share commonalties with previous participants. The new grant proposal draws on the experience gained from both the Apple Grants and the RLN grants in linking students from remote rural sites in a study of common issues in California. Students will use the RLN for communications while studying similar questions in a variety of regions throughout California. Students will share data via a Web Page data base and will prepare mitigation proposals based on their research. Students will create web pages sharing their findings with students world wide. Through the use of email, students will access experts in the various fields pertaining to their research

2. Each school will work to obtain hardware resources which will allow sharing of non electronic student work. In addition, teachers will be trained in use of email for transferring data. Through the use of the RLN, teachers will share reflections on student work in an effort to decrease the isolation experienced by many rural school teachers.

3. Teachers will continue action research to investigate issues about their use of technology in teaching and learning.

Discussion

Based on the reported results, there arise four questions, the answers to which could server to improve the efficacy of the RLN and its use to teachers.

Question 1

What dictates peoples participation in a dedicated communication network? Is it time, interest, technology skills, access, availability of hardware? Based on the results from year two (the first year where communications use was actually plotted), quantity or quality of equipment cannot be the limiting factor nor can access. CUES with 6-8 computers per classroom, with dedicated phone lines (and ISDN during year 2) was one of the lower participants (39 postings) considering that three teachers and one technology specialist began the project with only the technology specialist participating. WES with no computers in the classrooms and no school network access was the highest school participant (94). In this case, teachers used their home computers and their personal accounts to communicate with the RLN. Could the issue be training? Again the results show that the schools and or individuals who received the greatest amount of training on the use of electronic communications and or computer use, Camptonville teachers and preservice teachers were the lowest users of the RLN over the period of one year while WES with no training sent the most messages. Despite the obvious differences in available hardware, software, training, and access.

Question 2

What events precipitate a persons' involvement? There were 105 social postings, and 178 informational postings. It appears that teachers used the RLN primarily for two reasons. The greatest usage, informational, offered isolated teachers an opportunity to seek advice, referral, and assistance from a much large group of peers. It is obvious that the casual and or social interactions were important to developing the community of the RLN.

Informational postings did not begin at the outset of year two. Instead, social postings were prevalent in the initial months until people became comfortable with the other members of the list. Once this comfort was established, social use diminished as the primary use and informational postings increased. Social postings did remain an significant portion of the postings throughout the second year of the project.

Question 3

Why did the middle school and high school participants drop out? Each had students or issues that were similar to the other schools, each had ample training, available software, and free access both at home and in the classroom. A review of the nature of the messages indicates that little emphasis on grade specificity existed. Requests for information or assistance were applicable to the types of lessons and interests of both participants and were appropriate for students at each site. Follow-up interviews during year three will be conducted to determine what other factors influenced use of the RLN.

Question 4

What adjustments need to be made to respond to participants desires to share student work. Stated as a common goal for the RLN by teachers during the planning phases of the project, what prevented teachers from utilizing this aspect of the list. If possible, additional hardware will be obtained to ensure ease of use of the list for this purpose.

Summary

Creating a virtual community of people who are accustomed to working in rural isolation takes time. Evidence from year two of the RLN indicates that teachers can and will use a dedicated communications network to enhance their teaching, student learning. However, it appears that teacher use is much like teacher participation in other types of forums. Not all members of a group participate equally. In many cases, the majority of conversations occur between a few participants with others joining in only when an issue or topic holds specific meaning to them.

As with any new endeavor, it takes time, trust, and continuity to support and nurture these interactions. Interest from the teachers for the continuation of the RLN in year three is high. Participating preservice teachers from year two who are now employed in schools outside the RLN group have continued to post questions to the list, indicating that they value the virtual collaboration that the list provides and will continue to utilize this group as mentors at least until they develop new networks of support in their new locations. The expansion of the list to include new schools, a new cohort of preservice teachers and new students at the school will provide a continued and renewed forum for discussion of student learning and teaching strategies. The Rural Learning Network has proven to be the seed for other uses of technology in schools. The university will continue to offer technology support, maintain the list and the archives, and where ever possible provide training for teachers preservice and inservice in the use of technology in the curriculum.

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WOMEN IN THE RURAL PRINCIPALSHIP

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WOMEN IN THE RURAL PRINCIPALSHIP

Introduction

Identifying "what's best" in the rural principalship was the stimulus for this study. We know that women are underrepresented in administrative roles. The literature documenting this reality is prodigious (Grady, 1992; Grady & Gosmire, 1995; Grady & O'Connell, 1993).

We know too, that although the majority of schools in the United States are rural, the literature on schooling often overlooks the rural principalship. Our research was designed to highlight the positive experiences of women in rural principalships.

Procedures

To obtain the information needed to answer the research questions addressed in this study, women rural principals were interviewed. We believed that interviewing women rural principals would provide the depth of information required by the research questions.

Women rural principals in Nebraska and New Mexico were the subjects of the study. Twenty-one women rural principals were available for telephone interviews during summer and fall 1997. The principals answered 8 open-ended questions (See Appendix) in sequence during interviews of 30-45 minutes in length.

Each researcher independently reviewed the transcripts of the interviews and identified major themes. The researchers compared their findings to verify accurate identification and naming of themes. Independently, the researchers developed categories of themes. The researchers then compared the categories and developed the final analysis. The results are reported in the following section.

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In the interviews, we asked the subjects how they acquired their first principalships. The following comments represent the responses of these individuals.

> "I was approached."

> "I was originally a Title I teacher in the district. I did my internship under the current principal at that time, he left and recommended me. I was hired at the next board meeting. I don't know if the position was advertised."

> "I got drafted into being a head teacher. Over the years I just got more and more skilled."

> "I taught in this district for 3 years and was asked to prepare for the principalship. I was on the job before I got my Masters. I was a teaching principal for 2 years, half-time teaching principal for one year, then full time principal for four years."

> "I was a teacher for 20 years; then I was a head teacher, I got my administrative certificate, applied for my first job and got it as principal."

> "I applied, . . . I have been in the district for 17 years, 13 years as a teacher, 4 ½ years as a principal."

> "I taught for 7 years and was then a counselor for 4 years. I was an assistant principal for 4 years and I will soon be starting my 3rd year as principal. This has all been in the same district."

> "I was promoted from the classroom after 12 years of teaching experience to a position where I was acting principal at one building, principal at another building, Title I coordinator for the district and special education director for the district. I taught for 2 years in the district with my administrative certificate before being promoted. I had applied for a principalship in one other district but didn't get it. I was hired because I had an administrative certificate in place. I have people skills, and then I was asked by the special education director, and principal, to apply."

> "I was teaching first grade for six years in the district. I applied for the principalship and got it."

> "I was teaching here and had my administrative certificate, I was first a head teacher for one year. I taught for nine years. They came and asked if I would take it."

> "I was in the district and was promoted from within. I didn't apply for the position of principal. It was offered to me."

> "I applied for three jobs before receiving this principalship. The administrator before had the Special Education and Federal programs. He left the system and that job was split up. My first administrative job was to do federal projects; then when this principalship came up, they asked if I could do this principalship plus the federal projects. That was three years ago. The jobs have tripled and the staff has tripled, and the kids since then. I'm still doing all those jobs."

> "I applied for three jobs before this one. I was the assistant principal at another school after I had taught for two years at that school."

We also asked the women principals why they were hired and what qualities got them their jobs. Their comments follow.

> "I believe I was hired because of the continuity I provide, my commitments, dependability, and the belief I have in others including staff and students. I will try things and will listen to unhappy staff. I am able to brush off criticism and stay focused."

> "I am very assertive; I was vocal as a teacher. I am respected and listened to by others. I want what's best for the children and use that guide in all my decisions. Everyone knows that. It was unusual for me to get this job because I was not from the community."

> "Since high school I've always had leadership qualities. I am organized, and motivated. I have good communication and public relations skills. My speaking and counseling training, have caused me to be a good communicator."

> "I am a very good teacher. I have good organization skills; my background in personnel and business has helped. I had lots of supervisory work and had developed administrative qualities outside of education."

> "I was hired because of my reputation as a strong disciplinarian, because I am a decision maker and not afraid to take risks."

> ". . . my ability to do site-based management and my ability to be innovative and to create trends for the future. . . . They wanted a people person, someone who was not afraid to change things needing to be changed."

> ". . . because I have been in education a long time. . . . I have served on many committees. I am bilingual, I have a bilingual and counseling degree with a Masters in Curriculum and Instruction, Drug Abuse Training, Gang Intervention, and I am very involved with parents."

> "My leadership qualities, knowledge of school, and commitment to the community got me the job. I am also motivated and dedicated."

"I handle things with common sense. I am fair with people."

". . . because I was motivated, enthusiastic. I have a positive attitude and I am a doer."

"I was hired because of my perseverance and I had been Federal Project Director before."

". . . because I had done well at the junior high as an assistant principal. I knew what we were doing in the district. I knew what our discipline policies were, and I was hired because of my professionalism."

As part of the interviews, we asked the women what experiences prepared them for the principalship as well as whether they had mentors and what roles mentors played. Their responses follow:

> My preparation was the result of my grandmother who was a principal and my role model. She told me "keep focused, get to the heart of the matter." She always strove to keep me focused on honesty. The leading of the Lord has brought me to each position. You must have family support. People have put high expectations on me.
>
> I had 10 years teaching experience in reading, elementary, and bilingual. I did my internship under the principal. He allowed me to do all the paper work, actually to do everything a principal would do.
>
> I was a classroom teacher and coach since 1968. Between 1993 and 1988 I was a counselor and a teacher, then for 2 years I began assuming administrative responsibility. I had no title, everyone just called me head teacher. Then two superintendents, who I knew, encouraged me to apply for the principalship. I came from a family of administrators.
>
> I had a former principal who encouraged me, and my superintendent is my mentor. She taught me budget and finance.
>
> . . . my teaching experience as an athletic director, coach, and head teacher for 9 years. I also have a background of administration in my family. My mentor was a male superintendent who trusted me when he was not there. He felt that I could handle things and gave me lots of additional duties and responsibilities.
>
> . . . teaching serious, emotionally, and behaviorally disordered children. I was also acting principal for 3 or 4 years. My education courses, I'm teaching at the University at night, have been helpful.

I was an assistant for 4 years and a team leader, and also as a counselor. I had a mentor throughout and I also had a mentor at the University but my husband is my number one mentor.

My mentor was the person who had this job before me. He saw my potential and supported me.

The encouragement I have received has been from my family and my own inner drive.

. . . possibly my husband who was a principal. . . being a Federal Project Director. I had fourteen years of teaching before becoming principal.

. . . twelve years of teaching experience.

We asked the principals to describe what they liked best about their jobs as principals. Their responses follow:

. . . my success with students and staff and family.

. . . having a vision of where you want the children to be when they leave your school. I like seeing kids enjoy learning.

I enjoy teacher supervision.

. . . seeing the growth of teachers and students and the difference each of us makes if we try. I see the way changes have been accepted by my community, and supported by the community for 2 bond issues. I have seen buildings and programs grow.

. . . there is something new every day.

I like seeing kids grow and develop. I love creating a happy environment.

. . . working with staff and staying in touch with children. I like helping staff with classroom management and classroom problems.

. . . watching the children learn and grow. Watching hands-on learning.

I like best the students, kids are funny and loving, that's the joy for me.

I do a lot of counseling.

I love the people I work with and this age group of children.

> . . . trying to make things better for students and trying to make their learning better.

As a companion question, we asked the women rural principals what aspects of the job they found to be most enjoyable. Their responses follow.

> . . . working with people. Working with youth, I love working with youth and helping them realize the potential they don't know they have. I have the opportunity to provide a safe environment and let them know we care. I think we touch all students.
>
> I like working with kids and teachers. I like planning with teachers to create new ideas.
>
> . . . working with kids and teachers and developing different ideas and programs.
>
> I like working with students.
>
> I like developing, together with my staff, developing programs and educational objectives where kids will excel.
>
> . . . being with students where ever they are.
>
> . . . the people
>
> . . . interaction and feedback I get from students. I like being around them.
>
> . . . the children
>
> . . . relating to people
>
> . . . working with the children. I love dealing with their discipline problems

We asked the women rural principals what skills they relied on as principals. Their responses follow:

> . . . high expectations, organization . . . I always remain a teacher at heart, I follow through, I'm always gaining knowledge, I am a communicator and mediator, I maintain confidentiality and perform, I can read people. I also work on cutting down the bureaucracy and I have the ability to work with those who need constant maintenance.

. . . I wear a lot of hats. I am a counselor, I counsel parents and teachers, I act as a mentor to others, I am a listener . . . I handle stress well.

. . . communication, not so much what people say but how they say it. I am very structured and it works for me. People appreciate and recognize it. In everything I do I apply my counseling skills.

. . . budgeting experience, ability to supervise people, public relations skills, listening skills, visibility, accessibility to staff and students

. . . my instincts.

. . . people skills . . . I have to get along with everyone.

. . . communication, leadership, educational background, curiosity, innovative ideas, and risk-taking.

. . . diplomacy, I am an encourager, and I am learning discreteness and restraint.

Communication, level-headedness, sense of humor, writing skills.

Organization and management skills, ability to keep people's lives organized, patience, perseverance, I am like the energizer bunny, I just keep at it until something works. I have my goals that I work for enjoying people is a skill that's important.

Organization, people skills, good communication skills, and listening skills.

I pray a lot . . . I rely on common sense and I treat people the way I'd like to be treated.

. . . my people skills, my positive attitude, my global perspective, and my ability to deal with detail.

We asked the women rural principals who they turn to when they have problems.

Their responses follow:

I turn to my family, although I don't go into detail.

. . . my superintendent, we keep in constant communication. I talk with my husband, he is a good barometer for me. He tells me calm down and rethink before making decisions.

. . . other superintendents

> . . . depends on the problem. If it is a problem that could cause risk I turn to my superintendent. If other principals may have experienced it, I'll check with them.
>
> . . . my superintendent, old retired superintendents, and retired principals that I know. I also have a friend, a woman who is a former coach. . . the present principals in my area.
>
> . . . the superintendent, the secretary, . . . staff, or team leaders.
>
> . . . other principals or superintendent. . . . a group of friends who are educators.
>
> Superintendent
>
> It depends on the type of problem, I don't have "a" person, my superintendent is supportive. I still call my first mentor, who is out of state, if I need a confidential ear.
>
> . . . my secretary or my husband
>
> . . . my husband. In this job there's such a feeling of isolation. I've tried to network with other women, but they just want to be part of the "good old boy" system, and I won't compromise my ethics to do that.

We also asked the women rural principals to describe the support for their careers that they received from their families. Their responses follow:

> My family supports my long hours. My extended family supports me. My parents are beginning to express their pride verbally and more often. My husband has been my stronghold and sees me through.
>
> I had no support from my family early on. My husband is very supportive, comes from a family of educators and saw the importance of my being in education that's why he was my mentor.
>
> The support I receive is unconditional support, absolute understanding. I tend to work around the clock. My family has taught me that it's all worth it. They understand the difference an educator can make in people's lives.
>
> I have total support from my family. I could not have done it if not for my husband. As a woman in the rural principalship I find I have to be more assertive and better at my job. I have to work longer hours and show more success. Although I have had no problems, it has been a wonderful experience, a challenging experience, and very rewarding.

I got lots of support from my parents. I was raised on a farm and there was never a distinction between boys and girls, what boys could do girls could do. My husband has supported me. I am a coach, which is not a girl's thing. I am thankful for Title IX, it has opened up doors, and you know as women we have to be better.

My family gave me their blessing. They were great, my husband is a great listener.

The support I have received is total.

I get all the support that I need. They are my support system.

My family is extremely supportive.

My family has always been supportive. They have always told me "You can do it, just go for it. My husband is also very supportive, and as I was taking night classes and near the end of the semester, I would be so tired and he would go to school with me. I had a long way to drive at that time.

The support for my career that I've received from my family is good.

My husband has provided the ultimate support for my career. He has cooked and been my biggest support. He's a liberated man.

APPENDIX

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How did you get your first principalship? (Probe: Did you apply for many positions before you acquired this one?)

2. Why were you hired? What qualities got you the job?

3. What experience did you have that prepared you for the principalship? (Probe: Did you receive encouragement from someone? Did you have a mentor? What role did the mentor play? How many years did you teach?)

4. What do you like best about your job as principal? (Probe: What aspects of your position give you the greatest satisfaction?)

5. What aspects of your job do you find the most enjoyable?

6. What skills do you rely on in your position as principal?

7. Who do you turn to when you have a problem?

8. Describe the support for your career that you receive from your family.

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Leadership for Increasing the Participation and Success of Students in High School Advanced Courses: Implications for Rural Educational Settings

by

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Rural Education Research Forum

Abstract

Leadership to reverse rigid tracking practices can make a difference for student success. Through transformational leadership, administrators, teachers, and counselors can and must serve as catalysts for change from restrictive to inclusive advanced high school classes. Steps are underway by some states and districts to change past grouping practices which have served as restrictive factors for student motivation and success. Recognition is needed by educators of inequitable practices and the needed changes in high school grouping practices to open access to advanced level courses and help all students attain the prerequisite skills to be successful. Changing practices and policies to encourage more students to participate in advanced level courses are other important steps that can be taken immediately to improve secondary schools. Providing information for leaders in rural education of research pertinent to school leadership for increased student participation and success in advanced level high school courses, such as advanced placement courses, will be a primary aim of this report.

Leadership for Increasing the Participation and Success of Students in Advanced Courses: Implications for Rural Educational Settings

To achieve equity and excellence in schools and eliminate tracking, leadership is needed. While much of the research on tracking focuses on the need to eliminate this practice, many schools continue to enforce rigid grouping policies. In addition, in schools that are eliminating the multiple tracks leaving a regular and advanced level of advanced courses, many schools are not eliminating the rigid admission policies for enrollment in advanced courses. Students suffer from this rigidity. In other districts, barriers to entrance to the advanced courses are removed, but this new policy is not publicized. Students are not encouraged to participate and support systems are not established to assist in student success. It is important to remove the gap between research and practice concerning high school advanced classes. Consideration of factors involved in providing leadership in rural schools for greater student participation and success in advanced courses will be provided.

This research report will address the need to open access to advanced high school courses and encourage greater student participation and success in the courses. To assist a school in assessing the school's current system of course assignment, information on the common problems associated with school tracking systems will also be provided. Examples will be discussed which demonstrate that removing the enforcement of rigid admission criteria which prevent students from enrolling in advanced level classes and, instead, encouraging greater student participation in these courses produce benefits for students and the school. Finally, the role of administrators and teachers as catalysts for change in opening advanced level courses to more students will be proposed with recommendations for actions for leaders in rural education.

Analysis of the Problem

In considering the problems of tracking, an analogy can be proposed. In medicine, it is common to refer to a case that exemplifies all the symptoms of a disease as a "textbook case". In education, some schools are operating as "textbook cases" of tracking; that is, they are exemplifying all the problems normally associated in educational research as problems of tracking. These problems on the high school level include problems such as track placement is influenced by race and socioeconomic factors with the advanced track primarily white (Braddock & McPartland, 1990; Oakes, 1986; Darling-Hammond, 1994). In analysis of the problems traditionally associated with school tracking, as early as 1978, Pareluis and Pareluis reported that the problems of tracking include disparity in race, ethnicity and social class in assignment to levels of classes. In 1995, Furr reported that minorities disproportionately continue to be placed in noncollegiate tracks" (p. 36). Other researchers, (Oakes, 1985; Persell & Cookson, 1985), have pointed out that structural impediments are established by tracking systems that can affect equality, occupations, and income achievement. Harklau (1995) added, "Linguistic minority students are disproportionately and adversely affected by this system" (p. 347). Guiton and Oakes (1995) further reported that as a group in three school systems, African American and Latino students with the same test scores were less likely than White or Asian students to be placed in high-level courses.

Affluent parents push their children to be in advanced classes and challenge closed systems when their children are placed in lower tracks (Useem, 1992; George & Rubin, 1992) while less-affluent parents generally accept the level assigned without question (if they even know the level exists), when their children are placed in lower levels (Useem, 1992). Other problems in tracking include that counselors may influence students to enter lower level tracks (Gamoran, 1992); track decisions are often set in elementary school (Gamoran, 1992); and participation in the tracks is largely determined by junior high from the choice of middle school courses (Useem, 1992).

In particular, rigid tracking which results in advanced level classes open only to those meeting specific criteria denies the importance of effort to achievement and emphasizes intelligence as a fixed point. Though attribution theory suggests that motivation is increased when students believe that success is due to their own efforts rather than unchangeable features of themselves (Weiner, 1986 and Francis et al., 1993), rigid tracking systems downplay the importance of effort. This downplay of effort occurs, although the single most important personality variable consistently related to high academic performance has been shown to be the degree to which students believe that success depends on their own efforts (Brookover, et al. 1979; Coleman, et al., 1966; & Slavin & Braddock, 1994).

The problems of tracking are not universal in all schools that offer dual or multiple tracks in high school, but many schools reflect these problems and could be referred to as "textbook cases" of tracking. When dual or multiple tracks exist in high schools (e.g., a regular level of the course and an advanced level), rigid entrance requirements are often set to determine who can enroll in the advanced track. This practice often results in inequity (Darling-Hammond, 1994).

Just as in cancer advertisements with publicity given to suggest cancer's warning signs, tracking's warning signs might be noted by problems such as the following:

- The accelerated or honors classes, often the most segregated courses in schools, are composed primarily of Anglo students (Ford & Harris, 1994).
- The high school has open admission or allows waivers for all students to participate in challenging courses, yet the policy is not communicated to parents (Oakes, 1994).
- The eighth grade parent-student meetings concerning registration for ninth grade courses do not address the course sequences that best equip students for college as an option for students (Oakes, 1994).

A site-based team can consider each of these warning signs to determine if these are present within the school.

Fixed Groups

Black (1992) pointed out that "Ideas of fixed ability translate into fixed groups as students almost always stay at the level assigned and almost never move up" (p. 47). A poignant example of the practice of fixed grouping is the following student's account.

> Because of a clerical error, I ended up in a 'basic' English class during the first grading period of my sophomore year. Unaware of the way that students were tracked in the school, I was excited about the opportunity to be in a class where African American students were the majority. In my previous English classes the emphasis was on literature and composition. We read Dickens, Hardy, and Shakespeare. But in this class we were drilled in grammar and spelling. Each week we took a spelling test. Each week I got 100. In fact, I got an A on every assignment given. Nevertheless, on the first report card my grade was a C. When I questioned the teacher about it, she smiled and said, 'Why Gloria, a C is the highest grade possible in this class!'
>
> After a quick trip to my guidance counselor, the placement error was detected. I was returned to my rightful place in the college preparatory English class. The basic English teacher told me she was sorry to see me go and wished me well. I left that class confused and hurt. Why hadn't the teacher recognized that I had the ability to move out of it? And more importantly, why didn't my classmates know that no matter how hard they worked, their efforts would only be rewarded with mediocre grades? (Ladson-Billings, 1994, pp. 59-60)

Though Hallinan (1996) suggested that more movement is occurring within ability groups in some schools, underrepresentation of minority groups in the advanced level courses continues to be reported in this recent study.

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Student Segregation

Problems are created by tracking and closed access to advanced courses in secondary school. One of the problems when rigid tracking systems exist is the segregation of students. Gifted education has been termed "one of the most segregated programs in schools" (Ford & Harris, 1994, p. 211), a reality that raises a concern of "lost talent" (Hansen, 1994, p. 162). Many minority students may not be identified through standardized test scores which have tended to be "lower for minority students" (Hansen, 1994). In addition, minority status can "negatively affect advanced class assignment" (Gamoran, 1992a, p. 201). The National Commission of the Gifted encouraged use of a range of identifiers in selecting students for this program; however, overall ethnic minorities and the economically disadvantaged students are "consistently under-represented in programs for the gifted and talented" (National Commission, 1985, p. 129) and "over-represented in low track and basic classes" (Rogers, 1993, p. 11).

Just as there is concern about the small number of minority students in gifted programs, there is also concern about the number of minority students represented in honors programs in high schools. A recent publication of College Board entitled Access to Knowledge (1994) addressed this issue, discussing reasons for concern and ways that some districts are providing encouragement, access, and support to all students who want to commit to a more rigorous program of study. Some districts are responding to the concern that students should have open access to a more rigorous program of study, but many schools continue to limit access to more challenging courses.

Sorting Function in School

Why do arguments for rigid criteria for advanced classes persist, particularly in English and social studies, if students have prerequisite skills and desire to self-select these courses? To consider the closed access to advanced high school courses is to consider what some have called the "sorting" function of schools. Darling-Hammond (1994) suggested,

> Testing proved enormously useful as a means of determining how to slot students for more and less rigorous and costly curriculum when public funding of education and compulsory attendance vastly increased access to schools in the early twentieth century. IQ tests were widely used as a measure of educational input (with intelligence viewed as the raw material for schooling to sort pupils so they could be efficiently educated according to their future roles in society. (p. 10)

Darling-Hammond further stated that "frequently, tests were used to exclude students from schooling opportunities altogether. Though many proponents argued that the use of tests as a tool for tracking students would enhance social justice, the rationale for tracking was often motivated by racial and ethnic politics" (p. 10). In other words, concerns exist that tracking was originally designed to sort people--a practice some argue still exists.

Reasons for Rigid Ability Grouping in High School

A reason for rigid ability grouping has been a concern that gifted students may be bored in a regular homogeneous classroom, and their needs may not be met. This concept has prompted some districts to create pull-out programs for gifted students. However, the report, "National Excellence: A Case for Developing America's Talent," reported that motivation can be a factor in learning and discouraged rigid interpretation of student scores as the only method of identification of gifted students. The report (National Excellence, 1994) suggested identification procedures must "take into account the drive and passion that play a key role in accomplishment" (p. 26). The National

Science Association for Women in Science quoted in the Virginia Study (1992) stated that "no person can predict the perseverance and effort to become a scientist" (p. 47).

There are other reasons that rigid ability grouping in high school may exist. Fear may pose an element. Proponents of closed access to courses may resort to arguments of extreme. For example, in a conversation whether an A-B student can take an advanced freshman history, advanced English, or science course, a teacher may shift to a discussion of the difficulties of teaching a severely learning-disabled student in an honors class though this is not the topic of discussion. In the midst of a discussion of whether an A-B student can enroll in *one* honors class, a school official may tell of a student in tears every morning taking four advanced classes and working every night until one a.m. on homework. The shift to arguments of extreme and fear may have been reasons for closed access to rigorous high school courses (Darling-Hammond, 1994).

These are some of the reasons tracking and particularly closed access to advanced courses persist; beliefs about a "sorting" function of schools, rigid criteria for gifted programs, and fear. Problems also result from the closed access to more rigorous courses in that students learn more in the advanced level courses, and some students are denied this opportunity.

Benefits of Advanced High School Courses

Current research on tracking reported by Gamoran and Nystrand (1990) included the statement, "Consensus exists that students in higher groups and tracks learn more and the evidence seems clear that these students benefit from better teaching" (p. 218). In a study of the difference between students in tracked and untracked schools, "the tracked schools exhibited substantial achievement gaps among high-, regular-, and low-track classes with 25 to 35 percent of these gaps attributable to measured

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differences in what students experienced in the different types of classes" (p. 227). Furthermore, Gamoran and Nystrand (1990) reported, "The combination of higher-quality instructional discourse and better student participation helped high-track students learn more; in contrast, less engaging discourse and lower levels of participation are part of the reason that low-track students learned less" (p. 227). Oakes, (1994), suggested that nearly all educators are well aware that low-track students consistently have lower-quality opportunities to learn than do their peers in higher tracks.

Gamoran's research suggested that students benefit from participation in advanced courses. However, reports to the contrary are available. One report often cited to suggest that there are no benefits to grouping on the secondary level is Slavin's (1990) "Achievement Effects of Ability Grouping in Secondary Schools: Best Evidence Synthesis of Secondary Schools." There are, however, problems with Slavin's findings when interpreted for grades 10 to 12, key grades where benefits of advanced courses have been noted by other researchers. Slavin (1990) stated,

> Ability grouping is equally ineffective in all subjects, except that there may be a negative effect of ability grouping in social studies. Assigning students to different levels of the same course has no consistent positive or negative effects on students of high, average, or low ability. (p. 109)

However, Slavin (1990) suggested that limitations of his meta-analysis of grouping studies of 60 years were that it included no studies after 1968, included no studies of grades 10 to 12, included no studies of gifted students, and included no analysis of what occurred in the grouped classes concerning content or methods stemming from systematic observation of teaching and learning. These restrictions in the review make its findings subject to question for the secondary level. Is XYZ grouping being compared with grouping with different instruction and content? We do not know from the study. Hoffer (1992) suggested that if Slavin is correct, "then the considerable body of sociological research on the effects of tracking on cognitive achievement is simply wrong" (p. 205). Slavin's ultimate conclusion was that, "If content and instruction is not altered, then grouping alone has little effect" (Gamoran, 1992c, p. 13). This is a point supported in the literature. Gamoran (1992c) stated, "Slavin's ultimate conclusion echos a finding more than a half century ago; ability grouping has no effect on achievement unless teacher's use it to provide different instruction to different groups" (p. 13). This again seems to support the position that it is not whether students have been carefully screened before taking a more challenging course that is a key factor influencing achievement but, instead, whether instruction is different in these classes. In contrast to Slavin's research, Kulik (1992) reported gains in student achievement in advanced classes up to a year compared with students with similar prior ability as measured by standardized achievement tests.

Impact of Advanced Courses

Instructional issues affecting the benefits of participation in advanced classes include differences such as the level of courses and the level of discourse. Gamoran (1987) found that about half of the estimated track effect on math achievement could be accounted for in that academic track students complete more courses in math. Gamoran also (1992a) reported that high ability English classes place more importance on open-ended questions and discussion about literature than average or low track classes. These differences in courses influence student achievement gains. The National Education Association (NEA) in 1990 indicated there was a distinct correlation between a student's level of achievement in the subject and the student's exposure to the subject. A variety of factors affected the exposure:

a. Extent and kinds of courses

b. Content and rigor of the course

c. The extent entering students had taken advantage of advanced courses. (Virginia, 1992, p. 13)

This assessment is supported by research demonstrating that students in college preparatory programs take more academic courses, particularly in math and science (Gamoran, 1987; Vanfossen, Jones, & Spade, 1987). Teachers in high track classes present more complex materials at a faster pace (Metz 1978; Oakes, 1985).

When access to the more rigorous courses is denied, students have little choice in their exposure to the subject. The student cannot "take advantage of advanced courses" if the door is closed to them. Yet, Gamoran (1992b) stated from his national survey (1987) that followed more than 20,000 students from grades 10 to 12, "Advanced track students gained significantly more on tests of math, science, reading, vocabulary, writing, and civics compared to similar students in general and vocational tracks" (p. 12). Again, the difference seems to be in the work required by the class. Gamoran (1992b) studied 108 English classes over a two-year period with 40 in 8th and 50 in 9th grade with ability groups assigned on the basis of previous performance. His results showed that high track students read more language works and standard works of literature than do the low track students (p. 6). Also, low track spent less time on homework and completed fewer written assignments. Fill in the blank was "more common for the low track and essays for the high track" (Gamoran, 1992b, p. 6). Gamoran (1992a) reported, "Students in different levels of a given English class are exposed to different sorts of knowledge with those in the higher student groups reading more classic literature, writing more, and engaging in more criticism than those in other classes" (p. 188). Black (1993) reported that in high ability classes, teachers more often hold discussions with students "to pursue reason and unlock meaning" (p. 28). Also, in Oakes (1985) national study of junior and senior high school classes, differences in curriculum content, instructional activities, and classroom climate were found. In English, high track students read standard works of literature while low track students read young adult fiction. Oakes (1992) reported that in junior and senior high school, in English, the high track required more time spent on homework outside of class and gave more time to instructional activities in class.

Kulik's (1992) meta-analysis covered 23 studies of accelerated groups compared to equivalent students in accelerated classes and nonaccelerated control classes, and all of the studies examined acceleration of a whole class. In each of the comparisons of student equivalent in age and intelligence, average support for acceleration was nearly 1 year. The reasons given for the gains were "resources available, trained teachers, parents of these children bond in formal or informal networks, special foundations often available--any of these resources could add to the success" (p. xiii). Kulik's (1992) meta-analytic reviews have shown that the effects of group programs depend on their features:

> Programs that entail only minimum adjustment of course content for ability groups usually have little or no effect on student achievement. In some grouping programs, students are grouped by test scores and school records, then it is expected that all will follow the same basic curriculum. When this occurs, the medium and low learn about the same as in a mixed situation, and students in top classes out-perform equal students by only about 1 month on a grade equivalent scale. However, in grouping programs that entail more subsequent adjustment of curriculum, pupils out-performed equivalent control studies by 2 to 23 months on a grade equivalent scale. (p. xiii)

Again, the difference in results attained is in the difference in the adjustment of curriculum, not whether strict grouping criteria identify the students in the group. In these studies, the students grouped for instruction did not change. It was only when the subsequent adjustment of curriculum was made that increased learning occurred.

Researchers have noted some additional variables other than just a difference of in-class methodology that may influence greater achievement in the advanced track. Meyer and Rowan (1978) reported that students in different tracks develop beliefs that they are different and act accordingly. Gamoran (1992d) reported that students tend to form friendships with others in the same track. Gamoran concluded, "Social relationships within friendship groups promote differential attitudes and behavior" (p. 814). Other factors in the benefits attributed to advanced classes may be in the teachers assigned to these classes. Gamoran and Nystrand (1990) reported that teachers in high tracks are more enthusiastic, spend more time in preparation, and are considered more successful, a conclusion substantiated by previous researchers (Lacey, 1970; Rosenbaum, 1976; Finley, 1984; and Vanfossen, Jones, & Spade, 1987). Another key factor in the benefit of the advanced classes may result from the amount of homework done. McAdams (1994) stated the virtual absence of out-of-class assignments for many of our students means that classroom instruction takes on the passive characteristic of watching a game or a talk program" (p. 35). Advanced classes include more homework than regular or basic classes.

On the secondary school level, the issue in detracking seems not to be whether the courses should be eliminated unless the same rigor is to be required for all with support for success, but rather who is allowed to participate in the courses. Research results clearly point to the benefits of the advanced or accelerated classes on the secondary school level, but they do not point to the need for rigid entrance criteria.

These tracking problems illustrate inequities that occur in rigid tracking systems. They suggest the need for recruitment of students of all ethnic groups for advanced level high school courses and the need for communication of the merits of inclusive advanced programs to students and parents. Although a philosophy that all student will be challenged is fostered in many school goal statements such as, "All students will be encouraged to learn to their maximum potential," schools often create obstacles to student self-determination by rigid tracking policies in schools which restrict student admission to advanced classes. In particular, schools often set policies closing classes to students in high school not on the basis of whether the students have completed the prerequisites for the courses, but rather by arbitrary scores on criteria such as achievement tests and grade point averages. Some districts cite closed access policies to advanced courses as justified because the policies were site-based committee decisions, never considering whether the decisions meet the mission and beliefs of the particular school. In reality, schools may enforce policies of tracking that suggest the opposite of their stated beliefs.

Recommendations for a Plan of Action

Instead of continuing the practice of restricting enrollment in advanced level courses, educators can recognize the importance of student motivation to success in advanced level high school courses. In addition, schools can form vertical teams of subject specific teachers who would meet regularly to ensure that prerequisite skills are attained by students in preparing for the challenging high school classes. In detracking efforts, schools can remove barriers to student participation in rigorous classes and encourage participation by students of all ethnic groups and social classes. Schools can develop a plan of action to change restrictive policies to open challenging opportunities to all students who accede to the challenge, to communicate the benefits of advanced level courses, and to provide support structures to help ensure student success. To assist in making the plan, they can ask questions, such as, "Are the admission criteria for advanced classes used as a guide to help the student in decision-making or as a gate to restrict enrollment? Are the criteria measures, if used, set at a level to be inclusive, simply ensuring prerequisite skills, or at a level to exclude many students who could meet the challenge? Have the advantages of participation in advanced level high school courses, such as calculus, been communicated fully since middle school? Have elementary school students experienced heterogeneously grouped classes with only flexible within-class grouping to ensure that all students attain prerequisite skills? Do students recognize benefits of the advanced level high school courses? Are there rewards and celebrations for outstanding accomplishments? Do vertical teams of teachers of the same subject meet regularly to plan and ensure that prerequisite skills are attained by students which will be needed in advanced level classes?"

The Role of Leaders as Catalysts for Change

Welner and Oakes (1996) suggest, "Tracking systems are extraordinarily resilient and resistant to change" (p. 466). As other schools plan ways to increase student participation and success in advanced courses, leadership is needed to foster the dialogue of site-based committees and vertical curriculum teams in discussing current admission criteria for advanced classes and current efforts at student recruitment for those programs of study and ways to help more students attain the prerequisite skills. Educators also collaboratively can provide problem analysis concerning whether the inequities associated with "textbook cases of tracking" are evident in the school. For this, knowledge concerning the research on tracking is needed. Furthermore, although there are no recipes for successful detracking of schools, consideration of possible actions to open opportunities for more students is an important role of educators. While not seeking to provide one blueprint for successful recruitment and retention of students to advanced level high school courses such as advanced placement courses, this research report will identify leadership factors in schools that have contributed to greater student participation and success in advanced level courses.

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METHODOLOGY

Yin (1989) stressed that data analysis is not a cookbook approach with a step-by step method. The ultimate goal was to "treat the evidence fairly, producing compelling analytic solutions and to rule out alternative interpretations" (p. 106). The researchers, as Patton (1990) suggested, "identified and extrapolated lessons learned" (p. 435). The following research questions served as the framework for the study:

1. What practices and processes in educational leadership for equity and excellence for detracking are important?
2. What are the primary benefits and challenges relative to opening opportunities for greater high school student participation and success in advanced level courses?
3. What practices in professional development programs are effective in promoting knowledge and skills for educational leadership in equity and excellence?

For this qualitative study, the State Director of the Texas Mentor Schools Network, a network of selected high schools which are identified as lighthouse schools in terms of effectiveness, recommended mentor schools which had been most successful in detracking efforts of encouraging greater student participation and success in advanced high school courses. Six sites were identified through consultation with the State Director of the Texas Mentor Schools Network and through analysis of the Texas High School Mentor Network Resource Guide which identified key features of the mentor schools in Texas. Interviews were conducted with key administrators of the six sites. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed to discern themes or patterns in the data. Triangulation of the data occurred through member-checks and through peer-debriefing. Categories were formulated from responses to each of the research questions to discern practices and processes in educational leadership for achieving equity and excellence in advanced high school programs, benefits and challenges of inclusive programs, and considerations for professional development to support this reform effort. The research findings are presented as follows.

Research Question l

1. What practices and processes in educational leadership for equity and excellence for detracking are important?

Mentor Administrator Responses

Vision

The importance of a belief that what is most important is what is best for students was emphasized by mentor principals. As administrators stressed:

- What we do must be what's best for kids. That's the key. You must sell the faculty on this. What will it take to make kids successful is the guiding philosophy.
- It's a campus vision, truly a vision that all buy into. We are very student centered. We ask with every decision, 'Is this the right thing for kids?'
- We had a leader who was inclusive and didn't like tracking. You need leaders with vision and the backing to try to do something. Vision and support is important. Our school board and superintendent provide support.

Creating a strong academic focus is also important in the vision for the school. As administrators stressed:

- Our focus is academic . . .It's an attitude. Attitude is everything. For two years in a row, our [faculty] T-shirts said, 'Attitude is everything'. That's the bottom line. No matter what, first are the students...We have to break the cycle of setting up hurdles.
- We are very academically oriented. It is ok to be super-smart and take a full load of honors. We have a critical mass of kids who have chosen to take harder courses. They help establish that it's ok to stay home and study instead

> of doing this or that. We have created a culture of academic excellence.

Adopting the new philosophy is vitally important, and this influences actions. For example, as a principal commented:

> We used to remove students from advanced classes if they weren't making a certain grade. We've moved from all that. Even if the student is making C's, the student is better off in a harder course....If we never challenge them, we'll never know how far they can go.

For many schools, entrance criteria still exists. The difference in these schools that are successfully detracking is that these administrators do not use the criteria to control enrollment. As administrators commented:

> - We still have the requirement that a student must have a 3.5 grade average, no grade below a B in the subject, and pass all sections of TAAS, but kids pretty much self-select. It they don't make the grade, they may move down. Students can select an advanced level for interest or ability. There's much more flexibility now.
> - We try not to make decisions on a minimum score. We have criteria that the student must have a mid-80's grade in the previous course, reasonably high standardized test scores, teacher recommendations, desire to take the course, and the parent wants the student to take the course. But, I am happy to bend the rules if a student really wants in...Our District has a long list of rules of how to get students out of the classes. I operate on the philosophy that we are trying to get kids in, not get kids out.

Policy and Practices

Having a firm vision and philosophy that guides actions naturally leads to detracking. But to overcome past practices, leadership is needed to adopt policy and to change old ways of doing things. As an administrator commented:

> Twelve years ago, we had five tracks. You'd go in the honors classes and see all these blonde students with blue eyes. I said, "All teachers will teach low-level classes including AP (advanced placement) teachers and department heads. After this experience, the teachers said that we need to break this up. We did away with the low-level classes before the State did. Our policy is, 'Any youngster can sign up for AP or IB (International Baccalaureate) courses. If the student is floundering, then we'll notice and try to help. If we never see the load they can carry, they'll never know'.

It is important to note that the policy of the school is clear and is communicated by the principal. Changing the policy and communicating this change to the community can be very important in impacting change. For example, one high school began detracking efforts by communicating the change in policy to eighth grade classes:

> We've changed the curriculum to give more guidance. Instead, of the eighth grade teachers selecting courses for students, we send a team of administrators and students. We work at noon and visit with the eighth grade. We want them in those classes...We started with eighth grade. We wanted all to try hard subjects. We were not lowering our standards. Instead, of two freshmen English honors, we now have nine...We have three sections of regular and one honors in every team...We also identify students between 8th and 9th

> grades who are reading on the college level. We really encourage them in and if they are in Honors English, they also take Honors World Geography. If they are high in math, they take algebra and also biology honors.

An administrator from another high school commented:

> We advertise that the Pre-AP and AP courses are for the students who want to work. . . .In communicating about the classes, we stress that the student may not have to take the classes in college, and this saves money. We also talk extensively to them about the rewards of accomplishment.

In communicating about the program, an administrator reported:

> •We begin in the 8th grade and continue in 9th grade with alot of communication with parents. We do mailings about the advanced courses and have meetings for the department chairs to share with parents how important these courses are. From this, we have a large number of 9th and 10th grade students that funnel into the junior and senior AP classes. . . .Our objective ought to be to teach who want to learn and not be exclusive. It's almost evangelism. I try to share the benefits of the advanced classes with any group interested. It's the people who aren't even questioning the past practices that I worry about.

A part of another school's efforts to match philosophy and actions included renaming all honors courses as Pre-AP and increasing requirements. As administrators commented:

> • Changing the title was a piece of cake. We didn't sell AP as college credit. We sold it that the student needs to do this to be ready for college. It's an expectation... We make rules: English four years, algebra II must be taken to

> graduate...Any kid who wants in [an advanced level class], we'll let them in.
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> • Our district is doing away with the honors courses.
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> Instead, we will have only regular, pre-AP, and AP. Pre-AP is open to any student willing to put forth effort. Next year, we will have Pre-AP courses in English, science, and math.
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> • All students take four years of math. All go through algebra II, four years of science, social studies, and English. We want students to pick hard courses. We want them in those courses.

A Change Over Time

The change in attitude to open advanced classes to all students has taken some time though some steps were automatic. There was also no one magic bullet to success. Many practices contributed to the effort to get more students involved in advanced courses. The process is not instant, nor always easy. As one principal suggested, "Sometimes it was like pulling eye teeth [to get the different departments talking together about instruction]. As administrators stated:

> •It's happened over time. It's not any one thing. It's a million little things we do to recognize academics...It's not a specific strategy. It's a combination of all kinds of things and an attitude that our kids can do. They really can...We work on attitudes about the kids. We're all minority. We have smart kids. With teachers, we ask why kids fail. Some have no running water or electricity. We work on attitudes about these kids. They can do.
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> •It was not overnight. We are a magnet school. We started in 1978 to

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> build a culture of academic excellence. Every year, we work at preventing setting up a program of the academic haves and have nots. Our advanced placement and honors teachers teach regular classes as well. We also unite the kids through special interest courses.. . .We have tried to break the elitist ideas for six or seven years. We have made alot of strides in the last six or seven years. We still sometimes fight some of the more traditional views. The student makes 79.4 and the teacher wants him out. Sometimes the student with a 77 or lower needs to stay in the advanced classes.

Other administrators commented:

> •It took us five years to get out of the traditional [mode of operation]. We have an interdisciplinary English and history in 11th grade Math and science are now talking as well as physics and calculus teachers.
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> •Because we had a semi-open door to honors to start with helped. Our criteria included the student passing TAAS, parent recommendation, and or a screening test. Two out of the three criteria were needed. However, if the parent insisted, the student could have a year in the program. If they could make it, they could stay. It took us awhile for all to accept an open system. It seems to have helped that we send a letter home at the beginning of the courses explaining that the student is in a more rigorous program. The student also can exit the course if failing. .

Proactive Efforts

In terms of practices and processes that aided the detracking effort and getting more students involved in advanced courses, practices that influenced the change effort included other change efforts the school faculty was involved in. For instance, one of the principals stated, "Going to modified block schedules was one of the best things we did in the teaming and interdisciplinary approach." However, some of the practices that influenced this reform were more specific to this reform effort such as offering algebra in summer school to assist in getting more students ready for advanced math classes, establishing vertical teams for curriculum alignment, establishing an academic booster club, and engaging in extensive professional development. Concerning staff development, one principal commented," If anyone's worth hearing, we've brought them for teachers to hear. Our faculty also travels. They go places and lots of people come here." Continually engaging in learning is a mindset of both schools. That the change to more inclusive programs requires proactive leadership efforts was reinforced strongly by administrators comments:

- It is not a natural course of events [to get more students participating in advanced level courses}. It takes intervention. We need to do more earlier. If we can identify students with potential and look and try to find them and switch them to more challenging programs of study, we need to. Our success came because we didn't let the natural course of events just happen. We started in the mid 80's to intervene, and because of this, we are in better shape than some of the schools in our district.
- We don't exclude. We want AP to serve the GT, but we are going with the theory of inclusion. We're not excluding any kids by saying you didn't meet the criteria. We still have the honors criteria from when the application for honors courses were required by the Texas Education Agency, but if a student wants to try the harder classes for six weeks, they can try. If they can make the grades,

> we won't boot them out. We are also going to pre-AP for 7th and 8th grades. We want to get more and more to enroll in the AP classes.

Rewards and Celebrations

Other practices that influenced success were the multiple rewards and celebrations established by the schools to celebrate accomplishments of students in academics. One school principal stated:

> We have an academic booster club, like for sports. We have a very lavish banquet to honor academics. We also have a wall in the hall with pictures of the senior class and individual pictures of the valedictorian, salutatorian, and National Merit Scholars. As part of the Renaissance Program of Jostens, rewards for academics are given.

Another principal reported:

> Students have a red and a gold card. Academic letter jackets are given if the student is on the honor roll all year. It the student goes up on his or her average five points a six weeks, prizes are given. The prizes are for all, if improvement.

Research Question 2

2. What are the primary benefits and challenges relative to opening opportunities for greater high school student participation and success in advanced level courses?

Mentor Administrator Responses

Helping students recognize all they are capable of and helping them gain the prerequisite skills are primary challenges, yet detracking also has led to benefits. For example, one principal reported:

> Six years ago, we began to see, especially African American males who had the

> ability, but had not taken the necessary math in 8th grade to get to pre-cal and calculus. The last four years, we've sponsored a summer school for algebra. We went from one section of BC and two of AB calculus to three sections of each one. Also we're working on getting all youngsters as a freshman to declare a major and better guide them in preparation for the major.

One challenge is that when a school opens advanced placement classes to more students, all students may not make the 4's and 5's. One principal commented:

> We used to have mostly 4's and 5's [on AP exams when only a select few were allowed into the courses]. Now, we also have 2's and 3's, but we sold our community. We celebrate the 4's and 5's, but we also celebrate those who tried. It's tough for some of the more traditional [to accept this].

A benefit is clearly the increased numbers preparing for college. One principal reported, "We have 73 percent of our students taking the ACT or SAT." Another principal stated the challenge bluntly and emphatically, "With the tools, kids need today, we don't have a choice, we must do more." Another principal commented, "It's an expectation. We have 2,740 students. 300 are in one level or another of calculus. This is a primary benefit of the academic focus."

However, in spite of the benefits of more inclusive programs, some educators continue to hold on to past ideas of setting up hurdles for students to academic success. This is a challenge One principal stressed, "You must have the courage to say to some, 'That's wrong...Your job is to find a way for students to be successful'". As another principal added:

> For example [with the vertical team of department heads meeting with a representative from the three middle schools and a representative from each elementary school] we began discussion in math that we study fractions in 2nd grade, and it is taught every year, but it's our lowest math area. We got people talking about, 'It's not what you teach, it's what students learn.'

The benefits of the vertical team were discussed by another administrator, "I think aligning the courses and having a plan to have Pre-AP work into AP is beneficial."

One challenge may be to keep people talking. As one principal commented, "With 270 teachers on campus, we must formalize it [through vertical teams} to be able to get people talking". Another principal added, "We formed a cadre of 25 teachers of the school and ran. The fast runners set the pace and the others caught up. You have to get a core group of teachers. We are very site-based."

To keep from the challenge of having all the best teachers teach only advanced classes, administrators reinforced the importance of having teachers teach all levels. As one administrator commented, "All teachers teach honors and regular English. In math, we have 28 math teachers, only 2 teach only advanced classes".

One challenge for students in taking advanced placement tests is the cost of the test. One school solved this by paying for the test, if needed, then students repay the cost at $5.00 a week." Another school administrator commented, "Our district pays for the first AP exam for any student."

3. What practices in professional development are effective in promoting knowledge and skills for educational leadership in equity and excellence?

Mentor Administrator Responses

Training all the faculty in gifted and talented (GT) strategies and sending teachers and administrators to AP and Pre-AP training has been very beneficial in promoting detracking. As an administrator stated:

> We sent all teachers to the GT training, all who teach AP to the week-long training, and Pre-AP teachers to the two day institutes. What I hear from the teachers is that it's the best thing we've done. Once they go to this five day training, they want to go again.

Another administrator summarized the need for networking and professional development opportunities to effectiveness by stating:

> We also need to give principals the opportunities for professional development. I've had tremendous opportunities in professional development as a mentor principal. Some don't have this. We need to provide more Principals' Centers around the state. You don't get better by being a principal. You must talk to others and network.

Another key theme concerning professional development was recognition that effective staff development is not simply a presentation by an outside consultant or a one-time event. Quality staff development is on ongoing process with follow-up. It includes the provision of time for teachers to meet together to discuss the improvement of practice. Vertical team meetings by teachers of the various subject areas can be a critical component in improving the academic performance of all students to ensure that students acquire important prerequisite skills for later success in advanced coursework.

CONCLUSION

Sergiovanni stressed in his book, Value-Added Leadership (1990) that principals must demonstrate the moral conviction to "take a stand". From the preliminary findings of this exploratory research study, the importance of administrators' leadership in stressing the need to make all decisions based on what is best for the student emerged as a strong way that detracking for equity and excellence was being achieved. In addition, as Glickman (1993) suggested, decisions of the school should be based on the school's core values. The administrator guides the school in the recognition of core beliefs which influence actions, such as "Attitude is Everything" and "We can't know how far a student can go, unless we let them to as far as we can and get rid of the hurdles." Proactive leadership efforts include establishing an inclusive, academic vision for the school, changing or not enforcing restrictive policies, and communicating the open policy and the benefits of advanced courses to students and parents. Raising academic expectations to create an inclusive environment takes time and is not an automatic process. Even over time, all faculty may not "buy in" to inclusive practices and policies for advanced high school courses; however, proactive efforts of educational leaders can increase the number of students participating successfully in advanced courses and counteract opposition to inclusive programs. Rewards and celebrations can reinforce the school's academic focus. Challenges may persist, yet benefits are attained when educators proactively seek to increase participation in advanced level courses. As one administrator stressed, "The results then excite other people."

This was an emerging, exploratory study. Preliminary findings were presented here. The study will continue with additional schools in Texas. The practices and processes for detracking a high school have implications for all educators who champion equity and excellence. Above all, educators must question whether school practices and policies are based on what is best for students, providing leadership for enhanced student participation and success in advanced level courses with support systems for student success.

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THE OPERATIONS OF KENTUCKY RURAL SCHOOL COUNCILS

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Abstract

School council, a SBDM form of governance, is mandated for Kentucky public schools by the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA). The missions of school councils are prescribed in KERA. A random survey of 252 Kentucky rural schools was conducted to investigate what missions school councils in Kentucky rural schools undertook, what benefits these schools had gained from SBDM and what problems the councils were facing. 132 school councils participated in the survey. It was found that approximately 20% of the school councils undertook all the missions specified by the law, and the majority of the councils undertook most of the missions. Some of the missions were undertaken by various district offices, principals or school committees. The schools had benefited from councils' making concrete policies, promoting communication, addressing students' needs, etc. Main problems that various councils were facing included: lack of staff and parental involvement, time constraint, lack of equal status in membership, lack of focus on instruction related matters and lack of efficiency, etc.

The Operations of Kentucky Rural School Councils

The Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) was passed in 1990. Under KERA, the state's entire school system was restructured. Accordingly, major reform programs such as ungraded primary, performance-based assessment, extended school program and school-based decision making (SBDM), etc. have been implemented in Kentucky public schools.

The guiding premise of SBDM is that school principals, teachers and parents are the ones who best understand the contexts, and cultures of the school. Accordingly, these people are to be represented on the school councils (Guskey & Peterson, 1995).

SBDM in Kentucky public schools, according to KERA, works through a council commonly composed of the principal, three teachers and two parents, and they make decisions on how to help their students learn. The SBDM process gives parents, teachers, and principals substantial control over how that school operates, and allows each school to figure out the best way to move its students toward the seven state-wide KERA goals for student success. For staff, SBDM is an opportunity to control their own situation; for parents, SBDM is a chance to make a major contribution to their children's future (Weston, 1993).

SBDM is also intended to change the culture within each school, because teachers, parents who create the programs should have far greater enthusiasm for making them work. In short, SBDM is designed to be a form of democratic or shared school governance.

According to KERA, rules on how the school councils will be formed are generally set by district school boards. These rules specify the process for how council election will be handled. Even though SBDM is a KERA mandate, a school can also stop the SBDM, according to KERA, but only under limited conditions: A school must first produce student success level higher than the thresholds set for them by the Kentucky State Board For Elementary And Secondary Education. Then its faculty can vote to apply to the State Board to leave SBDM and return to administration from the central office. Schools meeting or falling below their thresholds are not eligible to leave the SBDM process (Kentucky Revised Statutes, 160.345(5), 1990).

The Kentucky SBDM law prescribes a list of functions (missions) to school councils: make decisions on curriculum and schedule, the use of school space, instructional practices and discipline issues, the assignment of instructional and noninstructional staff time, the assignment of students to classes and programs, etc. School councils also have a more general policy-making role: to set school policies consistent with district board policy, state and federal laws and regulations (Weston, 1993). In summary, school councils' functions include three general areas: instruction, administration, and personnel.

SBDM has been a popular governance option across this country. Many states have adopted SBDM as part of their reform practice. Research literature on SBDM addresses various issues and has contributed substantial knowledge on this form of school governance in practice. The issue of principal's leadership over a 3-year period in four elementary schools that implemented SBDM was examined by Haskin (1995). Her findings indicated that successful implementation of SBDM began with effective principal leadership. A facilitative leadership style was most compatible with SBDM. A facilitative principal shared decision making responsibilities on issues related to school management and administration, encouraged the development of relationship within the nonadministrative staff, and fostered a school climate of trust and efficacy. The principal also needed the support of some committed staff. She also found that female principals tended to have greater success with facilitative leadership. Blase, Blase, Anderson and Dungan (1995) had similar findings: Obstacles to shared governance in SBDM included the individual principal's characteristics, time, teachers, and central district administration.

The benefits of implementing SBDM has also been studied. Meister (1994) investigated a revised version of SBDM program called school-based instructional decision making (SBIDM), which was implemented in the regional centers' service area in Maryland. Meister found that the (SBIDM) teams worked collaboratively to reach decisions, used consensus-building techniques, produced plans and generally implemented their plans. Participants reported that they and their schools had gained significant benefits from SBIDM. Most of these benefits were related to the cooperative planning process. Increased involvement from parents, teachers and students was found to be needed, and more time, money, staff training and ideas as well. These findings were similar to those of Blase and colleagues' (1995).

One of the SBDM research areas is on challenges that schools with SBDM encountered. Peterson, Gok and Warren (1995) studied SBDM in 24 schools and identified some of the challenges associated with implementing SBDM. They found that the principals faced three particular challenges when implementing SBDM: (1) developing a clear, shared educational vision; (2) developing effective decision-making and governance processes; and (3) building well-functioning teams. Their findings suggest that implementing the SBDM program can be a real challenging task for any school.

With the Barnette and Hange's (1994) study, the operations and activities of faculty senates for the years of 1990 to 1993 were examined through a survey to the delegates of the West Virginia Education Association Delegate Assemblies. The respondents indicated an increasing faculty involvement in SBDM; however, they expressed declining support to decisions and less satisfaction with senate operations within the 3-year period. It was also found that for the schools practicing SBDM in West Virginia, there was a need for training, role clarification, and greater support from the school and district.

Whether implementing SBDM has achieved real shared governance was investigated by the Parents Coalition For Education In New York City (1993). It was found that the New York City version of SBDM failed to bring real SBDM to the schools. In New York, SBDM turned out be a cautious, politically correct, insider's version of school restructuring, with only weak teacher involvement, and token parental involvement. The SBDM component had not delegated any authority from the community school boards of the central bureaucracy.

In a study by Case (1993), the cognitive constraints of participating teachers involved in SBDM were examined through interviews with 34 teachers at a rural high school in Connecticut. These teachers perceived that the majority of their decisions were made under cognitive constraints and indicated a lack of adequate information and time. They attributed time constraints to a lack of administrative support. Quick changes in the structure of school governance caused confusion for teachers. Some teachers reported operating under "pseudo decision-making--the decision is actually made by the administrator in charge." This finding is similar to those reported by the Parents Coalition

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For Education In New York City (1993).

The issue of parent involvement in SBDM in selected Texas secondary schools was examined by Schaeffer and Betz (1992). Their findings indicated that parent participation in SBDM (budgeting, staffing patterns, curriculum, etc.) was limited and generally not desired by school personnel or parents. However, parents' lack of involvement was due to misunderstandings, not a lack of time.

The effects of using school-based participatory decision making to improve services for low achieving students were examined by Jenkins, Ronk, Schrag, Rude and Stowitschek (1994). A reform program composed of a host of intervention strategies generated through the SBDM process was implemented for one year. Measures of teachers' perceptions, students' achievement, and teachers' ratings of students' behavior were obtained from 72 teachers and 1,362 students in 12 experimental schools, and from 76 teachers and 1,062 students in 10 control schools. Results indicated that the intervention program resulted in positive teacher attitudes toward the change process, in new approaches to organizing instruction, and in more mainstreamed instruction. However, no treatment effects on students' achievement and behavior were found.

Literature also includes studies on various aspects related to SBDM implementation in Kentucky. Teachers' attitudes toward SBDM were investigated by Daniel and Shay (1995). Two hundred twenty-eight teachers in 12 Kentucky SBDM schools and non-SBDM schools were surveyed. The data indicated that teachers in SBDM schools tended to report more positive attitudes toward SBDM than those at non-SBDM schools did. However, neither group reported negative attitudes toward this management approach. In another survey, Logan (1992) found that 2/3 of the school personnel surveyed believed SBDM improved the quality of decision making during the initial year of operation. It seems that teachers generally are not resistant to this form of school governance.

Like teachers, Kentucky parents were found to be enthusiastic about SBDM (David, 1994). The number of parents running for school councils and voting in election was small; most school councils had little teamwork or representative experience, and few councils dealt with the learning related topics. Still, participants were enthusiastic.

The development of a working relationship among council members at the end of one pilot-year was investigated by Lindle (1992). Two hundred eleven pilot-year school council members responded to the survey. It was found that principals tended to express the most satisfaction with communication, although in general respondents were optimistic about the potential of school councils.

The lessons learned about SBDM by Kentucky school councils were summarized by Lindle (1996). According to Lindle, they had learned that their councils must represent their local constituencies, gain the support of local political structures, shun legalism, concentrate on substantive education issues, and develop a democratically based decision making process.

With respect to how schools councils operated, Kannapel, Moore, Coe and Aagaard (1994) reported on 10 of the 20 rural schools in four school districts that had adopted SBDM. Seven schools began the formal implementation in 1991-92 school year. Only one of the seven school councils practiced balanced decision making where all members participated as equals in decisions and discussions. In three councils, teachers and principals dominated decision making, although parents at two of the schools had begun to play a stronger role. The remaining three councils served as advisory groups to the principal, or made rubber-stamped decisions. Councils that practiced some level of shared decision making made key decisions in budgeting, scheduling, and to some extent, curriculum. All councils participated in decisions about personnel and, to some extent, discipline. Principals' support and facilitation of SBDM, leadership by other council members, attentiveness to the need for parent involvement and council training were found to be factors that contributed to effective SBDM implementation.

Similar findings were reported by Kannapel, Moore, Coe and Aagaard in 1995. They investigated whether true shared governance was achieved by councils in four Kentucky rural districts. Likewise, they found that SBDM councils in rural schools experienced difficulties in achieving true shared decision making.

With respect to the link of decision making to student performance, David (1995) reported a study of SBDM that focused on early examples (13 schools) of connections between council decision making and changes in curriculum and instruction. Findings indicated that councils were tackling more complex issues. But most council decisions continued to have a non-academic focus.

Whether the SBDM process helped students achieve better was investigated by the Kentucky School Boards Association (1996). The study reported that with respect to KIRIS (a Kentucky state testing program) scores, non-SBDM Kentucky schools showed greater improvement in achievement than the SBDM schools did. The SBDM schools did not achieve at the level of non-SBDM schools. The above literature review reveals that a variety of problems exist in SBDM practices, which are keeping SBDM from improving teaching and learning (Guskey &

Peterson, 1996).

According to KERA, by July 1, 1996, all Kentucky schools will establish councils in their schools, except a number of schools that are exempt from implementing SBDM by the Kentucky State Board For Elementary And Secondary Education. Before the summer of 1996, school councils had already been in operation in over 2/3 of the Kentucky public schools.

The purpose of this study was to investigate what missions Kentucky rural school councils undertook, what benefits these schools had gained from implementing SBDM, and what problems these councils were facing.

Method

A survey was conducted to collect data relevant to the research questions.

Participants

Current school council members were surveyed. For one school council, the survey included the principal member, one teacher member and one parent member.

Procedure

A randomized stratified sampling was conducted via the Kentucky Schools Directory (Kentucky Department of Education, 1996-1997), starting with the first school in the Directory. Approximately one in every four rural schools was selected. To insure that small school districts have an equal chance to participate, one school from every small district with fewer than four schools was selected. A total of 252 rural schools were selected via this sampling process.

For each surveyed council member, the survey package included one introductory letter, one questionnaire and one reply-envelope. A big envelope containing three such packages was mailed out to each of the school principals with his/her name printed along with the address. The names and addresses were copied from the Directory. The purpose of the survey was explained to each of the members in the introductory letter. The principal was requested in the letter to help distribute one package to a teacher member, one package to a parent member.

All three reply-envelopes were coded with a same number in pencil marks printed at the left upper corner of the reply-envelopes. The number code represented only an individual school, and the coding was for analyzing or comparing the council members' responses to the open-ended questions on the questionnaire or to the situations in the same school.

Instrument

The survey questions were developed based on the Kentucky Educational Reform Act--The Kentucky Revised Statutes, Section 160.345, which determines the missions of school councils:

1. Make policy to enhance achievement and KERA goals;
2. Determine the number of persons employed in each job classification;
3. Select textbooks;
4. Select instructional materials;
5. Select student support services;
6. Select new principal;
7. Consult with principal before he or she selects persons to fill out vacancies;
8. Make curriculum policy;
9. Make staff assignment policy;
10. Make student assignment policy;

11. Make school schedule policy;
12. Make school space use policy;
13. Make instructional practices policy;
14. Make discipline and classroom management policy;
15. Make extra-curriculum policy;
16. Make policy for determining alignment with state standards, technology use and program appraisal.

Following the above questions, open-ended questions were also included to collect information on benefits the schools had gained, and problems the councils were facing in their SBDM practices (see Appendix).

Results

Out of 252 (N=252) Kentucky rural schools surveyed, 132 schools responded. The return rate was 52 percent. One survey was returned from each of the 103 schools , and two or three council members participated from each of the 24 schools, 5 schools were exempt from forming SBDM. Totally, 169 surveys were returned: 51 principals, 69 teachers, 44 parents, 5 non-member principals. The major findings follow.

As to whether these school councils made policies to enhance KERA goals, 89% of the councils did such job; this job was done by school districts according to 1.6% of the schools; by principals, in 1.6% of the schools; by school committees, in 1% of the schools. The rest of schools reported "Can not tell."

With respect to who determined the number of persons to be employed for each job classification, 64% of the councils made such decisions; council members in 16% of the schools reported that their districts made the decisions; in 2.4% of schools, principals made such decisions; in 6.3% of the schools, such decisions were made by school committees. The rest of councils provided no information on this issue.

In regard to textbook selection, 66% of the councils did such work, and 24% of the councils approved recommendations on textbooks from school committees or departments. As to selecting instructional materials, 46% of the school councils did so, and in 40% of the schools this job was done by departments or committees. Student support services were selected by 67% of the school councils; the same job was done at district level according to 15% of the schools. Curriculum policy was made by 86% of the school councils; this policy was made by district offices according to council members in 4% of the schools, and by school committees in 4% of the schools.

Seventy-eight percent of the school councils were responsible in selecting new principals; districts were doing such job according to 5.5% of the schools; school committees selected new principals in 6.3% of the schools. Staff assignment policy was made by 55% of the councils; principals made such assignment in 19% of the schools; districts made such decisions according to 7% of the schools. Student assignment policy was made by 60% of the councils; principals made such policy in 19% of the schools; departments or committees made this policy in 9.4% of the schools.

School schedule policy was made by 65% of the councils; districts made such policy according to council members in 9.4% of the schools; principals made the policy in 12% of the schools; departments or committees did so in 8% of the schools. As to school space use, 72% of the councils made such policy; district offices made this policy according to council members in 3% of the schools; principals made the policy in 12% of the schools.

With respect to making instructional practices policy, 74% of the councils were responsible for this; district offices made the policy according to council members in 5.5% of the schools; principals made this policy in 4.7% of the schools; departments or committees did so in 6.3% of the schools. As to discipline and classroom management policies, 78% of the councils made the policies; district offices made these policies according to members in 6.3% of the schools; principals did so in 5.5% of the schools; committees did this job in 8% of the schools.

The extra-curriculum policy was made by 75% of the councils; and this policy was made at district level according to council members in 4% of the schools; principals made such policy in 4% of the schools; committees made this policy in 2.4% of the schools. With regard to the policy on alignment with state standards, technology use and program appraisal, 76% of the councils made such policy; districts made the policy according to council members in 5.5% of the schools. Lastly, 92% of the councils reported that they met regularly to conduct duties. In summary, the data indicated that 19% of all 127 councils actually undertook all the missions prescribed by KERA.

The following is a summary of the responses from all 127 school councils to the open-ended questions (Questions 18 to 22). In regard to the areas where the school council did a good job, council members from various schools responded: making concrete policies, promoting communication between staff and parents, identifying priority problems the school was facing, addressing the school/student needs immediately, curriculum review and extracurriculum, selecting personnel, using resources to the maximum, budgeting, etc.

The weaknesses shown by various councils were: lack of (non-member) faculty and parental involvement, lack of understanding of legal requirements, showing weakness in coordinating committees, having a short-term vision, lack of focus on instructional matters or being bogged down on non-instructional matters, lack of efficiency, having little power or functioning as rubber stamp, parent members adding little to decision making, a lot of politics on councils, etc.

Mixed responses were provided by various council members to the issues of effectiveness and efficiency of the SBDM practices: Members from 2/3 of the councils provided positive answers, and 1/3 of them said "no" to the effectiveness issue; however, most of these members responded "not efficient."

As to the working time spent by various councils, the findings were: on administrative issues, the range was 1 to 95% of the councils' working time, the average was 26%; on personnel issues, the range was 1 to 40%, and the average was 14%; on instruction-related issues, the range was 5 to 90%, and the average was 34%; on other issues, the range was 3 to 85% and the average was 16%.

In terms of the benefits gained by various schools from council's work, the responses were: Students, parents and teachers had more ownership; more funds were available; more people were involved; stakeholders had more active roles in education; decisions were no longer made by one person; schools had better schedules; a variety of issues were addressed by councils that had never been addressed before, etc.

With respect to the problems that various councils were facing, the answers were: little staff support and involvement; not enough time for performing duties; many parents being too busy to get involved; to make the principal realize that he/she is only an equal member; not having a focus on curriculum and instructional practices; not having effective discipline in school; the process being too slow; many decisions being made at district level, etc. The data also indicated that new councils (formed within one year) faced more challenges than those formed for four or five years.

Twenty-four sets of questionnaires were returned: Each set consisted of 2 or 3 surveys from 1 school council. A comparison of the responses among the members (principals, teachers and parents) indicated that parents provided the most positive answers to Questions 18, 20, 22; no parents supplied negative responses to Question 20; more teachers (as a group) than principals (as a group) responded positively to Question 20.

Discussion

The data indicated that in some Kentucky rural school councils, principals were still the dominant decision-makers, which generated the so-called "rubber stamp syndrome." This phenomenon was also found in other places (Case, 1993; Parents Coalition For Education In New York City, NY, 1993). The data also showed that in a number of schools, some parent members reported that teacher members did not regard parent members as equal members, which suggests that the unequal membership phenomenon takes more than one form in Kentucky rural school councils' practices. Achieving a true shared governance in day-to-day operations may still be a goal to be reached by some Kentucky rural school councils.

The ultimate goal of implementing SBDM is to help students improve learning or to move students toward the seven state-wide KERA goals for student success. Yet the data showed that the amount of working time spent on academic matters by Kentucky rural school councils differed from school to school. This suggests that different school councils had different priorities. Some councils spent more time on administrative matters, some did so on personnel issues, some councils spent more time on other matters, but few councils used most of the working time on instruction related matters. It seems that re-establishing priorities remains a task to be accomplished by most of the councils.

Many participating council members reported that few school staff and parents would like to run for council membership or get involved in council business, because they were already too busy or "(their) hands are already tied." Limited parental and teacher involvement in SBDM practices may hinder the functioning of a true shared governance. Apparently, efforts need to be made by school councils to improve parental and teacher involvement in SBDM in many Kentucky rural schools.

The data indicated that some of the missions prescribed by KERA for school councils were run at district level or by principals. It is unknown why this is so. The data also revealed that school councils with longer service years functioned more effectively and efficiently than those formed within one year. This may suggest that SBDM had been a learning experience or a developmental process for many council members. They functioned better with more experiences obtained.

It is interesting to know that parent and teacher members held more positive opinions about their councils' performances, and approximately 2/3 of participating principals had similar opinions. This may suggest that SBDM was popular among most of the rural council members, while 1/3 of the participating principals did not consider SBDM to have done a better job than the previous form of governance in their schools did.

Conclusion

Implementing SBDM in Kentucky public schools is a major educational reform project. The Kentucky Education Reform Act has determined the missions of school councils. However, the findings of the study indicated that a small percentage of Kentucky rural school councils actually undertook all of the missions or tasks prescribed by KERA. In various schools, some of the missions were conducted at the district level, by principals or by school committees, or rather, most of these councils did not handle some of the missions prescribed by KERA. It was also found that more parent council members than teacher members held positive views toward the performance of their school councils, and more teacher members than principal members had such opinions. For the schools, the main gains from council's performance included making concrete policies, address concrete issues, address students' needs, and shared governance, etc. The main problems that various school councils were facing, were: little staff and parental involvement, time constraint, lack of focus on instruction-related matters, lack of equal status in membership, lack of efficiency, and many policies being made at district level, etc.

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Appendix

Questionnaire For School Council Members

You are a: principal______, parent______, teacher______.

Your school level: Elementary____, Middle____, High____.

Please respond to whether your school council does the following jobs: (Code references: Y = Yes, N = No, C = Can't tell)

1. In what year was your school council formed? ______________
2. Does your school council make policies to enhance achievement and KERA goals? Y____; N___; C___.
   If not, who does the job? (specify)______________________
3. Are the number of persons employed in each job classification determined by your school council? Y___; N___; C___;
   If not, by whom? _________________________
4. Does your school council select textbooks for your school?
   Y___; N___; C___; If not, who does? _____________
5. Are other instructional materials selected by the council?
   Y___; N___; C___; If not, by whom? _______________
6. Are student support services selected by your school council?
   Y___; N___; C___; If not, by whom? _________________
7. Is your school council responsible in selecting new principal?
   Y___; N___; C___; If not, who does this job? ____________
8. Curriculum policy in your school is made by your school council?
   Y___; N___; C___; If not, by whom?______________
9. Does your school council make staff assignment policy?
   Y___; N___; C___; If not, who does this job?_______________
10. Does your school council make student assignment policy?
    Y___; N___; C___; If not, who does this job? ____________
11. Does your school council make school schedule policy?
    Y___; N___; C___; If not, who does this job?_____________
12. Does your school council make school space use policy?
    Y___; N___; C___; If not, who does the job? _____________
13. Does your school council make instructional practices policy?
    Y___; N___; C___; If not, who does the job?_____________

14. Does your school council make discipline and classroom management policies? Y___; N___; C___;
If not, who does this job?____________________

15. Does your school council make extra-curriculum policy?
Y___; N___; C___; If not, who does this job? __________

16. Does your school council make policy for determining alignment with state standards, technology use and program appraisal?
Y___; N___; C____;
If not, who does the job? ___________________

17. Does your school council meet regularly to conduct its duties?
Y___; N___; C___.

Please respond to the following questions.

18. In what area (s), do you think your school council does a good job? (Please specify.)

19. In what area (s), do you think your school council shows weakness in doing its jobs? (Please specify.)

20. Do you think your school council does a better job in governing than the previous form of school governance in terms of efficiency and effectiveness?

21. To your best knowledge, how much time does your school council spend on the following issues?
Administrative issues: _____ % of the working time;
Personnel related issues: _____ % of the working time;
Instruction related issues: _____ % of the working time.
Other issues: _____ % of the working time.

22. Please make comments on what benefits the school has gained from the council's work so far and what problems the council is presently facing.

Thank you for your time and help!

Perceived Leadership Practices of Rural Superintendents: Men and Women Who Lead

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Perceived Leadership Practices of Rural Superintendents:
Men and Women Who Lead

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Conventional wisdom holds that there are gender-based differences in the practices of men and women in leadership positions. The issue has been explored from a number of different perspectives, encompassing both sociocultural explanations and structural viewpoints (Bell 1988.) Stereotypically, men are seen as using a direct "command and control" style of leadership while women are assumed to be more collegial and collaborative. While it is certainly true that not all men are directive and controlling, nor all women collegial and collaborative, there has been general consensus by both researchers and practitioners that gender makes an impact in the way one leads an organization. This study explores the issue of gender differences in leadership through an examination of the perceived leadership practices of male and female superintendents of small and rural school districts in Texas. Data for the study was collected using the Leadership Practices Inventory-Self (LPI-Self) developed and refined by James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner (1988; 1995.) Analysis of the data may shed some light on the question of gender-based leadership practice.

Review of the Related Literature

The literature on differences in male and female leadership styles is extensive (Adkison, 1981; Ortiz and Marshall, 1988) and tends to support a more open and relationship oriented leadership style for women. For example, Carroll (1989) in a study of women leaders in higher education, noted that women tend to have a more sharing style of leadership than men and to focus more on "empowerment" and team building activities. Helgeson's The Female Advantage (1990) noted that women tended to work at the same pace and under similar conditions as men, but they reported feeling less controlled by their work situation and therefor suffered less stress. Women also tended to spend more time with people and to emphasize good working relationships with colleagues. Women also maintained a more complex network of relationships both on and off the job and felt less isolated then men. Helgesen also noted that women leaders viewed themselves as more at the center of things than at the top of things as men did. Shakeshaft's Women in Educational Administration (1987) argues that the current leadership paradigm is based on studies of white males and that when female leadership patterns are considered five gender differences in leadership style can be noticed: (1) women administrators emphasize relationships with others in their work; (2) women administrators make teaching and learning a central focus; (3) community building is an essential part of women administrators style; (4) women administrators are constantly aware of their marginal status; and (5) women administrators tend not to maintain a strict separation between their public and private lives. Rosener (1990) in her study of male and female leaders worldwide found two gender specific leadership patterns to exist. The first pattern, which Rosener calls "command and control," appears to be more typical of males in leadership positions. The second pattern, which Rosener calls "interactive," was more typical of female leaders, who were much more likely than males to encourage participation from co-workers and to share power and information with them. However, she tempers her findings with the statement that most of the women she studied were in medium-sized organizations that had recently experienced fast growth and rapid change. As a consequence these organizations were in flux and open to doing things in nontraditional ways. In this settings, Rosener notes, nontraditional types of leadership may be more appropriate and readily accepted than in larger, more established types of organizations. Finally, Eagly and Johnson (1990) performed a meta-analysis of studies on gender and leadership style which revealed a slight tendency of women in organizational settings to be more democratic than males. The researchers declined to argue that this differences was an absolute advantage for women, noting that expert opinion on leadership effectiveness viewed the organizational environment as more determinative of effective leadership style than gender. In other words, under some circumstances, a democratic approach to leadership would be effective while in other circumstances it might be ineffective.

There are, of course, other researchers whose findings support the view that there are little if any real differences in the leadership styles of men and women. For example, Gabler (1987) argues that successful women school executives do not necessarily lead in ways that differ substantially from successful men. On a somewhat broader scope, Donnell and Hall (1980) studied the ways nearly 2,000 male and female managers performed on specifically defined aspects of the managerial process searching for confirmation of gender-based differences. Their study was based on two assumptions: (1) for any study of gender differences in leadership to be valid "the comparative dimensions should relate to and be valid indicators of managerial competence, " and (2) " individuals studied should be truly comparable," that is, hold the same type of job or occupy the same organizational level. (pg. 62.) Donnell and Hall concluded:

> ...And after all is said and done, we have detected a total of two overall differences between male and female managers. One of these, involving managerial work motivation, favors females: Their work motivation profiles are more "achieving" than those of their male counterparts. The other difference, pertaining to interpersonal competence, favors the male managers: They are more open and candid with their colleagues than are females. Add to these the more titillating than significant anomalies of differing back-up style preferences and we are left with one conclusion: *Women, in general, do not differ from men, in general, in the ways in which they administer the management process* (italics in original) (Pg. 76.)

At this point it would appear that the issue of gender-based differences in leadership is still open to discussion.

Research Methodology

Theoretical orientation. This study is grounded in the research on leadership practice done by Kouzes and Posner (1995.) These researchers conceive of leadership as a set of observable and learned practices which are gender-neutral and which form the basis of a relationship between leader and follower. Much of this relationship rests on the credibility of the leader and his or her ability to motivate others to want to strive toward achieving shared aspirations. Kouzes and Posner see a clear distinction between mobilizing others to do something and mobilizing others to want to do something. Anyone in a position of authority can compel compliance from others by reason of the power they wield. But the leader motivates others because of the credibility s/he possesses. This credibility is sustained by what the leader does--by challenging, inspiring, enabling, modeling and encouraging. These behaviors are the essence of leadership.

Using Kouzes and Posner's research as a basis, this study examines the perceived leadership practices of male and female superintendents of small and rural school districts in Texas. The intent of the study is to test the hypothesis that *there are no significant difference in the way male and female superintendents of small, rural school districts perceive their own leadership practices.* Application of appropriate statistical procedures will enable the researcher to accept or reject the null hypothesis.

The Leadership Practices Inventory The Leadership Practices Inventory was developed using both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The conceptual framework for the inventory grew out of an extensive series of in-depth interviews and written case studies which explored the

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"personal best" in leadership practices of mid- and senior-level managers in a wide variety of public and private institutions (Kouzes and Posner, 1988; 1995.) The LPI explores five key leadership practices. These are: *challenging the process; inspiring a shared vision; enabling others to act; modeling the way;* and *encouraging the heart.* Each of these key leadership practices are focused on distinct aspects of leadership . For example, *challenging the process* explores the extent to which the leader searches for opportunities to change the way the organization functions and encourages experimentation and risk taking. *Inspiring a shared vision* involves the leader in joint construction of a common vision and in enlisting the support of others for achieving that vision. The leadership practice of *enabling others to act* explores the extent to which a leader fosters collaboration in the organization and strengthens others as they participate in collaborative efforts. *Modeling the way* probes how the leader sets a positive example for others in the organization and plans small wins in the change process. Finally, the practice of *encouraging the heart* assesses the leader's recognition of the contribution of others to the well-being of the organization and the ways in which s/he celebrates the accomplishments of the work group. Respondents to the inventory indicate whether they engage in the described behavior seldom or rarely; once in a while; sometimes; fairly often; or very frequently. To date, the LPI has been administered to managers and nonmanagers in a variety of public and private organizations and across demographic and national backgrounds.

The complete Leadership Practices Inventory consists of two instruments, the LPI-Self and the LPI-Observer. The LPI-Self is a self-assessment instrument while the LPI-Observer measures other's perceptions of the leader's practices. Internal reliability measures for the LPI are strong, ranging from .81 to .91. Internal reliability for the LPI-Self range from .71 to .85 and for the LPI-Observer from .82 and .92. Although designed as a part of a feedback assessment activity involving the leader and his or her co-workers, the LPI-Self can justifiably be used as a self-reporting device. Mean scores for the LPI-Self and the LPI-Observer differ by only plus or minus

1.2 points (Wesson and Grady, 1994; Kouzes and Posner, 1995) thus making this a reliable measure of leadership practice.

Procedures. During the 1996-97 school year, Texas had ninety-four female superintendents, out of a total of 1048 superintendents of schools. Of these ninety-four female administrators, thirty-seven led districts which could be classified as small and/or rural. For purposes of the study, "rural" is defined by the geographic location of the school district and the population of the county in which the district is situated. A school district is considered to be small if it enrolls fewer than 2000 students. Letters inviting participation in the study were sent to each of these thirty-seven women superintendents. Twenty-three female superintendents indicated a willingness to participate in the study and twenty eventually returned completed copies of the LPI-Self. The sample of female superintendents was matched with a like number of male superintendents, using the same selection criteria. Letters inviting participation in the study were also sent to the male superintendents. Twenty-two males agreed to participate and of these eighteen returned completed LPI-Self surveys. In all, thirty-eight completed copies of the LPI-Self were returned for analysis.

Analysis of Data. Mean scores for the instrument as a whole and for each subscale were compared using the t-test (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997) with a probability level for rejection of the null hypothesis set at .01. This operation revealed a significant difference in response between male and female superintendents for the instrument as a whole and for two of the five subscales. No significant differences in male/female responses were found on the other three subscales. Table I displays the means and differences in the means for male and female respondents to the LPI-Self while Table 2 contains T scores, degree of freedom and p level for the pooled variances of the means for male and female respondents.

Table 1

Intergroup Means for LPI-Self Total Instrument and Scales

Scale	Female	Male	Difference
Total	123.450	114.722	**8.728**
Challenge	24.550	21.389	**3.161**
Inspiring	23.350	21.944	1.406
Enabling	26.400	26.222	0.178
Modeling	24.950	22.778	**2.172**
Encouraging	24.200	22.389	1.811

Table 2

Pooled Variances for LPI-Self Total Instrument and Subscales

Scale	T	DF	p
Total	2.807	36	**.0080**
Challenge	3.170	36	**.0031**
Inspiring	1.439	36	.1589
Enabling	0.319	36	.7516
Modeling	3.058	36	**.0042**
Encouraging	1.759	36	.0870

Significant differences ($p=.01$) in the responses of male and female superintendents to the LPI-Self appear for the total instrument and for two of the five subscales, *challenging the process* and *modeling the way*. No differences between the perceived leadership practices of the genders were found for *inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act*, or *encouraging the heart*. But what do these numbers reveal about actual leadership practice? First of all, female superintendents in the sample perceive themselves as engaging in all of the leadership practices described in the LPI-Self either " very frequently," or "almost always" more consistently than did the male superintendents. Mean scores for the total LPI-Self are significant here. The mean score for all female respondents to the instrument was 123.450 while the mean score for male superintendents responding was 114.722. An examination of the specific behaviors included in the subscales may also prove enlightening. First, let us turn to those subscales where significant differences in perceived leadership behaviors were found. The leadership practice of *challenging the process* focuses attention on the leader's search for opportunities to do things differently in the organization and his or her willingness to experiment and to take risks. The specific leadership behaviors in this subscale include such things as seeking out challenging opportunities that test the leaders skills and abilities; keeping up-to-date on the most recent developments affecting the organization; challenging the traditional way things are done at work; looking for innovative ways to improve organizational operations; a willingness to learn from failures; and experimenting and taking risks. The mean scores of responses on this subscale indicates that women superintendents perceived themselves employing these leadership behaviors more frequently than did the male superintendents.

The second area for perceived differences lay in the leadership practice *modeling the way*. This subscale of behaviors describe the leader's ability to set an example for members of the organization and to plan small wins. The specific behaviors described here include such things as having a clear grasp of one's own leadership philosophy; breaking projects down into manageable steps, thus increasing the probability of success; spending time and energy making sure that organizational members adhere to agreed upon values; communicating to others one's own belief and value system; demonstrating behaviors consistent with the values espoused; and setting clear goals and benchmarks for work projects. Here again, female superintendents perceived themselves as engaging in these leadership behaviors more consistently than male superintendents.

In three of the subscales of the instrument, male and female superintendents exhibited little or no difference in the perception of their own leadership behaviors. These subscales are *inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act*, and *encouraging the heart. Inspiring a shared vision* measures the leader's perception of his or her ability to envision the future and to enlist the support of others in achieving that vision. Specifically, this subscale measures the extent to which the leader describes to others the type of future that could be jointly created; appeals to others to share the vision of the future as their own; communicates a positive and hopeful outlook for the future of the organization; convinces others that their own long-term future vision can best be realized by sharing in a common vision; forecasts what the future might look like; and is excited and enthusiastic about future possibilities. Male and female superintendents tended to be very much alike in perceptions of this key leadership practice.

Enabling others to act measures the leaders ability to empower others and to foster collaborative efforts. Here again, male and female superintendents shared a consistent perception of their own activities. Specific behaviors in this subscale include involving others in planning; treating others with dignity and respect; permitting wide discretion to others in decision making; developing cooperative realtionships with co-workers; establishing an atmosphere of mutual trust; and inspiring a sense of ownership in others for the work projects in which they engage. Finally in *encouraging the heart* the leader celebrates accomplishments; recognizes the contributions of others to the success of work projects; praises others for work well done; gives appreciation and support to team efforts; finds ways to celebrate accomplishments; and informs others in the organization about the good work done by his or her work group. Male and female superintendents were once again in general alignment in their perceptions of their own behaviors in this subscale.

Implications for Further Research and Conclusion. This study found that statistically significant differences do exist between male and female superintendents of small rural school districts in the ways in which leadership practices are perceived, particularly in the leadership practices of *challenging the process* and *modeling the way*. However, no significant differences were found in the way these same male and female superintendents perceived their leadership practices in *inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act*, and *encouraging the heart*.. Several implications for further research are embedded in the results of this data. In the first place, how might the differences in leadership practices between male and female superintendents on two subscales of the instrument but general agreement on three others be explained? Are women more adept at finding innovative ways of doing things and in providing role models than men or were there contextual factors present within the environment of these particular superintendents which called for a different emphasis leadership practice? The direction and extent of these differences needs to be explored. Further, since the sample of this study was circumscribed by definition, would administration of the instrument to a larger sample of male and female superintendents have the same results or did the small sample negatively impact the results? Finally, while the differences in perceptions of male and female superintendents may be statistically significant, what relevance do these results have for the actual practice of current superintendents or for the preparation of future superintendents? If research of this type is to be justified it must have a practical application to the field. How can these findings be applied to enhance the practice of all superintendents?

The overall results of this study are consistent with other researchers who found gender differences in certain perceived leadership practices using the LSI (Riley, 1991; Dunson, 1992; & Long, 1994.) Where this study differs is not in the discovery of differences in perceived leadership practices between males and females, but in the specific subscales in which those differences occurred. Insufficient data exists at this point to explain this discrepancy, but it may warrant

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further exploration. What the data does support is the firm conclusion that male and female rural school superintendents hold differing perceptions of some, but not all, of their own leadership practices.

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DRAFT

A Model for Rural School Consolidation: Making Sense of the Inevitable Result of School Reform

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A Model for Rural School Consolidation:
Making Sense of the Inevitable Result of School Reform

School consolidation has been part of the American education milieu for almost as long as there have been schools. Potter (1967) reported as early as 1874, that Quincy, Massachusetts began transporting students from small schools to large graded ones. Webster (1981) defined consolidation as the joining together into a whole, strengthening, or merging, "a public school formed by merging other schools" (p. 240). Isenberg and Taudien (1964) suggested that the most recent changes to the sturcture of rural schools began about 1935 when the nation was in the midst of a serious economic depression.

Although America is no longer a predominately rural nation, "the majority of its school districts are located in very small towns and rural areas" (Glass, 1992, p. ix). Overall, small districts, defined as those having fewer than 3,000 students, constitute approximately 75 percent of districts in the nation and provide an education for about 30 percent of the elementary and secondary school-age population (Schmuck and Schmuck, 1992). Fifty-one percent of all districts are both small and rural (ERIC, 1991; Schmuck and Schmuck, 1992).

"As rural and small schools are typically the target of school consolidation, the threat of school closures persists as perhaps the most important concern in many American rural communities" (DeYoung and Howley, 1992, p. 1). As early as 1874, smaller schools were merging into larger ones (Potter, 1967). In the 1930s "there were 128,000 school districts and over 238,000 schools in America. By 1980, the number of school districts had dropped to 16,000 and schools to 61,000" (DeYoung and Howley, 1992, p. 1). Chance (1994) reported that between March 1980 and March 1988, the number of rural farm children decreased by 25 percent from 1.6 million to 1.2 million.

Seal and Harmon (1995) suggested that "changing schools means changing the community and its culture" (p. 119). The schoolhouse is more than just a place for children to receive instruction; it is also a place for many adult activities, such as social gatherings, political rallies, and dances (DeYoung and Lawrence, 1995; Tyack, 1974). Benton (1962) stated that "consolidation is a subject most small, rural communities approach gingerly, if at all. Citizens have too much emotion invested in the local schoolhouse, the sports team, and the community's education heritage to do otherwise" (p. 1).

DeYoung and Lawrence (1995) indicated that school reformers throughout most of this century have attempted to create larger and more efficient schools. "School consolidations have been justified on two primary grounds: (a) the bigger is better philosophy, and (b) economic efficiency" (Migyanko, 1992, pp. 45-46). DeYoung and Howley (1992) suggested that state policymakers and educational professionals spearhead efforts to consolidate "as moves toward improving cost effectiveness or accountability" (p. 1). Economy of scale, curricular advantages, greater student opportunities, and better facilities are all arguments for consolidating the smaller schools (Chance and Deering, 1993; DeYoung and Howley, 1992; DeYoung and Lawrence, 1995; Link, 1971; Stern, 1994).

The consolidation of schools has played a major role in school reform. Consolidation as a reform strategy has recently been encouraged and financially rewarded in Oklahoma with the passage of H.B. 1017, yet it is often met with anxiety and hostility from stakeholders. Rural communities across Oklahoma fear a loss of identity without their schools. But consolidation is a reality that must be investigated whether it be voluntary or involuntary. This research was designed to collect information through semistructured interviews with selected Oklahoma superintendents who have experienced voluntary school consolidation. The data was then used to identify any strategies utilized by the rural superintendents involved in this process which enhanced the voluntary consolidation of their schools.

The Study

Since the passage of H.B. 1017, Oklahoma's education reform bill, in November 1989, there have been 51 school consolidations reported in Oklahoma by the State Department of Education (1995). Nine of the consolidations were voluntary, that is, the districts merged free of local, state, or federal mandates to do so.

This study collected data from the use of semistructured interviews with the superintendents involved in eight of the voluntary school consolidations since H.B. 1017. One consolidation was not used because a superintendent involved in the process could not be found. The methodology required contrasting and comparing the data from both superintendents in each district involved in the consolidation. Other sources of data included researchers' notes, school board meeting minutes, newspaper articles, consolidation plans, and feasibility studies submitted by the Oklahoma State Department of Education.

All of the superintendents participating in the study were guaranteed anonymity and that no individual, school, or school district would be identified in any report of the research. In order to provide anonymity, fictitious names were provided so that the readers of this research might not tell where and from whom the data was collected (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992). The eight consolidations representing sixteen rural school districts are listed in Table I.

Table 1
The School Districts

Consolidation #1	*Superintendents*
Stony School District	Mrs. Peterson
Agewater School District	Mr. Alex
Consolidation #2	*Superintendents*
Tin Mill School District	Mr. Rich
Valley School District	Mr. Steen
Consolidation #3	*Superintendents*
Reid School District	Mr. Martin
Big Rock School District	Mr. Bates
Consolidation #4	*Superintendents*
Gerry School District	Mr. Burman
Nona School District	Mr. Taylor
Consolidation #5	*Superintendents*
Barley Heights School	Dr. Williams
Mabel School District	Mr. Walters
Consolidation #6	*Superintendents*
Bowman School District	Mr. Hoover
Fayeville School District	Mr. Stephens
Consolidation #7	*Superintendents*
Sentry School District	Mr. Myers
Andrew School District	Mr. Landry
Consolidation #8	*Superintendents*
Lyndale School District	Mr. Horton
Fittsview School District	Mrs. Earls

Methodology

This study is qualitative in nature. Qualitative researchers seek to make sense of personal stories told by participants (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992). "They are also concerned with understanding behavior from the subject's own frame of mind" (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992, p. 2). A phenomenological approach was utilized in order to better understand the meaning of the events and the interactions of the people involved in the consolidations (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992). Baden (1994) wrote that qualitative designs allow participants to talk in their own words and at their own level of understanding. The interview method was the primary tool of data collection for this study. Researchers' notes, school board meeting minutes, newspaper articles, consolidation plans, and feasibility studies submitted by the State Department were also part of the data analyzed.

An interview guide was developed to lead the interviews and "offer the subject a chance to shape the content of the interview" (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992, p. 92). As qualitative interviews vary in their degree of structure, Bogdan and Biklen (1992) contended:

> In keeping with the qualitative tradition of attempting to capture the subjects' own words and letting the analysis emerge, interview schedules and observation guides generally allow for open-ended responses and are flexible enough for the observer to note and collect data on unexpected dimensions of the topic (p. 77).

These questions were maintained as the central theme for each participant interview.

The validity of the interview questions was strengthened through the involvement of others in a content analysis (Holsti, 1969). First, the questions were sent to three University of Oklahoma professors for evaluation of content and construction. The process then involved soliciting input from three university professors in educational administration in other states who utilize qualitative research extensively. The third step included two Oklahoma superintendents experienced in school consolidation since H.B. 1017. They were given copies of the questions and asked to analyze them for clarity, appropriateness, and validity. All of the comments and suggestions from these experts in the field were used to improve the content of the interview questions, thus strengthening the validity of the questions (Holsti, 1969).

A pilot study was also conducted with an Oklahoma superintendent experienced in school consolidation since H. B. 1017. The semistructured interview was conducted in a manner similar to the actual research interviews. The interview guide was followed and the interview was tape recorded and transcribed. This superintendent was not part of the final study.

During the semistructured interviews, the superintendents were listend to carefully and researchers tried to understand the perceptions of the participants (Wolcott, 1990). The goal was to understand the various superintendents' points of view (Borg and Gall, 1992). Transcriptions and other collected data were analyzed repeatedly over the course of several weeks to build inter- and intrarelater reliability (Bowers and Cartwright, 1988).

Summary of Findings

Various strategies utilized by Oklahoma superintendents in order to provide a more efficient, productive and less threatening consolidation process were identified through the data analysis of this study. Data was analyzed aruond seven research questions. These research questions provided the focus of the study during the collection of the data and during the content analysis.

Question 1: What strategies did the superintendents who have participated in voluntary school consolidation utilize to enhance the consolidation process for teachers?

Strategies that enhanced the consolidation process for teachers included guaranteed job security, teacher reassignments, an enhanced curriculum, faculty meetings, consolidation plan input, teacher displacement compensation, and community committee input. The strategies are identified in Table 2. Also identified are which consolidations saw the utilization of which strategies.

TABLE 2

STRATEGIES USED THAT ENHANCED THE CONSOLIDATION PROCESS FOR TEACHERS

	Consolidation 1	Consolidation 2	Consolidation 3	Consolidation 4	Consolidation 5	Consolidation 6	Consolidation 7	Consolidation 8
Job Security	yes	yes/no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
Reassignments	yes	yes	yes		yes			
Enhanced Curriculum						yes		
Faculty Meetings	yes	yes	yes	yes		yes	yes	yes
Consolidation Plan Input				yes	yes			
Teacher Displacement Compensation			yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	
Community Committee Input					yes			

Question 2: What strategies did the superintendents who have participated in voluntary school consolidation utilize to enhance the consolidation process for parents and the community?

Nine strategies were identified through this study that enhanced the consolidation process for parents and the community. Community meetings, newspaper articles, keeping all sites open, input on the consolidation plan, and open transfer policies for students were all demonstrated. Other strategies included committee input, enhancement of the curriculum and student activities, and utilization of opinion polls and surveys. Table 3 outlines the strategies for the eight consolidations.

TABLE 3

STRATEGIES USED THAT ENHANCED THE CONSOLIDATION PROCESS FOR PARENTS AND THE COMMUNITY

	Consolidation 1	Consolidation 2	Consolidation 3	Consolidation 4	Consolidation 5	Consolidation 6	Consolidation 7	Consolidation 8
Community Meetings	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Newspaper Articles	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Maintain All Sites	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	no
Consolidation Plan Input	yes		yes	yes			yes	
Open Transfer	yes			yes				
Joint Board Meetings	yes	yes	yes		yes	yes		yes
Committee Input			yes				yes	yes
Enhanced Curriculum & Activities			yes	yes				yes
Opinion Poll/Survey			yes	yes		yes		yes

Question 3: What strategies did the superintendents who have participated in voluntary school consolidation utilize to enhance the consolidation process for the students?

Strategies which were utilized to enhance the voluntary consolidation process for students included expanded curricular and activity opportunities, consolidation plan input, surveys and/or opinion polls, joint student-body activities, committee input, open transfers, and enhanced facilities. Students were very involved in at least three of the eight consolidation processes. Table 4 has a complete outline of the strategies utilized to enhance the consolidations for students.

TABLE 4

STRATEGIES USED THAT ENHANCED THE CONSOLIDATION PROCESS FOR STUDENTS

	Consolidation 1	Consolidation 2	Consolidation 3	Consolidation 4	Consolidation 5	Consolidation 6	Consolidation 7	Consolidation 8
Expanded Curricular and Activity Opportunities	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Consolidation Plan Input	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes		yes	yes
Opinion Poll/Survey								yes
Joint Student-body Activities	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	
Committee Input					yes		yes	
Open Transfer	yes	yes						yes
Enhanced Facilities	yes							

Question 4: What strategies did the superintendents who have participated in voluntary school consolidation utilize to enhance the consolidation process for the support staff?

Five strategies were identified that enhanced the consolidation process for the support staffs. Job security, maintaining all sites, staff meetings, job displacement compensation, and community committee input were all noted. Table 5 provides an outline of the strategies and which consolidations utilized which one.

TABLE 5

STRATEGIES USED THAT ENHANCED THE CONSOLIDATION PROCESS FOR THE SUPPORT STAFF

	Consolidation 1	Consolidation 2	Consolidation 3	Consolidation 4	Consolidation 5	Consolidation 6	Consolidation 7	Consolidation 8
Job Security	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Maintain All Sites	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	no
Staff Meetings	yes	yes		yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Job Displacement Compensation			yes	yes	yes	yes		
Community Committee Input								yes

Question 5: What strategies did the superintendents who have participated in voluntary school consolidation utilize to enhance the consolidation process for the administrators?

Three strategies were utilized to enhance the consolidation process for administrators and were consistent across the eight consolidations. Four strategies were identified with three being evident in all eight of the consolidations. Those revealed in all eight consolidations were pre-consolidation administrative appointments, job security, and consolidation plan input. The fourth strategy, job displacement compensation, was revealed in three of the consolidations. Table 6 outlines the four strategies and the consolidations in which they were utilized.

TABLE 6

STRATEGIES USED THAT ENHANCED THE CONSOLIDATION PROCESS FOR THE ADMINISTRATORS

	Consolidation 1	Consolidation 2	Consolidation 3	Consolidation 4	Consolidation 5	Consolidation 6	Consolidation 7	Consolidation 8
Pre-Consolidation Administrative Appointments	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Job Security	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Consolidation Plan Input	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Job Displacement Compensation				yes		yes	yes	

Question 6: What strategies did the superintendents who have participated in voluntary school consolidation utilize to enhance the consolidation process for the board members?

Eleven strategies were utilized within the eight consolidations to enhance the consolidation process for board members. Those most evident included joint board meetings, consolidation plans, community meetings, board member selection agreements, and advisement from the State Department of Education. Other strategies included creating a seven-member board, using outside advisement, community committee input, school tours, board retreats, and opinion polls or surveys. A complete outline of the strategies utilized with each consolidation is contained in Table 7.

TABLE 7

STRATEGIES USED THAT ENHANCED THE CONSOLIDATION PROCESS FOR THE BOARD MEMBERS

	Consolidation 1	Consolidation 2	Consolidation 3	Consolidation 4	Consolidation 5	Consolidation 6	Consolidation 7	Consolidation 8
Joint Board Meetings	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Consolidation Plan	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Community Meetings	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Board Member Selection Agreements	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Seven-member Board	yes		yes					
State Department Advisement	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Other Advisement	yes		yes				yes	
Community Committee Input							yes	yes
School Tours				yes		yes		
Board Retreats			yes					
Opinion Poll/Survey			yes	yes		yes		yes

Question 7: What strategies for voluntary consolidation were not productive?

Nine strategies were identified during the consolidations that proved nonproductive. Three of the nonproductive strategies were indicated in more than one consolidation process. They were community meetings, closing schools, and the State Department feasibility studies. The remaining six nonproductive strategies were only identified in a single consolidation processes. These included forced consolidation, relocating or removing school memorabilia, relocating administrative furniture, seven-member boards, school name and mascot agreements, and job security for teachers. Table 8 outlines the nine nonproductive strategies and the consolidation in which each was revealed. It should be noted that nonproductive strategies are situational, that is, a strategy proposed as not being productive during one consolidation could have been a very worthwhile process in another.

TABLE 8

STRATEGIES USED THAT WERE NOT PRODUCTIVE

	Consolidation 1	Consolidation 2	Consolidation 3	Consolidation 4	Consolidation 5	Consolidation 6	Consolidation 7	Consolidation 8
Forced Consolidation	yes							
Removing School Memorabilia		yes						
Relocating Administrative Furniture		yes						
Seven-member Board			yes					
Community Meetings					yes			yes
School Name and Mascot Agreements					yes			
School Closings						yes		yes
State Department Feasibility Study						yes	yes	
Job Security for Teachers							yes	

INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

The various strategies utilized by Oklahoma superintendents who participated in the eight voluntary consolidation efforts in Oklahoma since H.B. 1017 have been identified and documented through this research. Successful strategies are those utilized by a majority of the districts represented in this study.

For teachers, job security, faculty meetings, and teacher displacement compensation were the most significant strategies utilized in the eight consolidations. Teachers wanted to know that they would still have a job with the consolidated district, and if not, that they would be compensated for being displaced. Displacement compensation offered teachers eighty percent of their salary for one year plus the option to secure a position in another school district. Faculty meetings were utilized to keep the teachers informed and up-to-date on the consolidation process in their district. Table 9 outlines the most significant strategies utilized for teachers.

TABLE 9

SIGNIFICANT STRATEGIES USED TO ENHANCE
THE CONSOLIDATION PROCESS FOR TEACHERS

	Consolidation 1	Consolidation 2	Consolidation 3	Consolidation 4	Consolidation 5	Consolidation 6	Consolidation 7	Consolidation 8
Job Security	yes	yes/no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
Faculty Meetings	yes	yes	yes	yes		yes	yes	yes
Teacher Displacement Compensation			yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	

Four strategies that enhanced the process for parents and the communities were most evident throughout the eight consolidations. Community meetings and joint board meetings were means to which superintendents and boards of education could communicate with the public. The meetings allowed board members to stay in touch with their constituents and served as vehicles for sharing information efficiently. Others experienced in school consolidation were able, through joint board meetings and community meetings, to discuss and answer questions for patrons. Newspaper articles, too, kept the patrons informed as to the consolidation plan and dates for board meetings, community meetings, and elections.

The closing of schools was an important issue for parents and the communities. Six of the eight consolidations were able to maintain all of the existing sites. Communities feared a loss of their populace and identity without their school. Table 10 illustrates the strategies that were most utilized for parents and the community.

TABLE 10

SIGNIFICANT STRATEGIES USED TO ENHANCE
THE CONSOLIDATION PROCESS FOR PARENTS AND THE COMMUNITY

	Consolidation 1	Consolidation 2	Consolidation 3	Consolidation 4	Consolidation 5	Consolidation 6	Consolidation 7	Consolidation 8
Community Meetings	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Joint Board Meetings	yes	yes	yes		yes	yes		yes
Newspaper Articles	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Maintain All Sites	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	no

Expanded opportunities, consolidation plan input, and joint student-body activities were most evident in enhancing the consolidation process for students. Expanded opportunities included more classes, especially higher-level courses, additional programs such as art and cheerleading, and enhanced athletics. Consolidation plan input allowed the students opportunities to select the school name, mascot, and school colors. Students worked on community committees or with other students. Joint student-body activities included visiting schools, meeting teachers, attending programs together, and planning events for the up-coming school year. Table 11 outlines any significant strategies utilized to enhance the consolidation process for students.

TABLE 11

SIGNIFICANT STRATEGIES USED TO ENHANCE
THE CONSOLIDATION PROCESS FOR STUDENTS

	Consolidation 1	Consolidation 2	Consolidation 3	Consolidation 4	Consolidation 5	Consolidation 6	Consolidation 7	Consolidation 8
Expanded Curricular and Activity Opportunities	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Consolidation Plan Input	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes		yes	yes
Joint Student-body Activities	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes		yes

Successful strategies that enhanced the consolidation process for the support staffs were job security, maintaining all sites, and staff meetings. In these small, rural schools the support staffs were treated much like other staff members. Their concerns were similar, also. The support staffs wanted to know they had a job with the consolidated school or how they would be compensated if a job was not available. Support staff displacement compensation was similar to the teachers'. The displaced employees were offered eighty percent of their salary for one year plus the option to secure other employment and still receive the payment. Staff meetings were utilized to inform the support personnel of the consolidation plan and the decisions made as it progressed. Table 12 indicates the strategies most utilized during the eight voluntary consolidations to enhance the process for the support staffs.

TABLE 12

SIGNIFICANT STRATEGIES USED TO ENHANCE THE CONSOLIDATION PROCESS FOR SUPPORT STAFFS

	Consolidation 1	Consolidation 2	Consolidation 3	Consolidation 4	Consolidation 5	Consolidation 6	Consolidation 7	Consolidation 8
Job Security	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Maintain All Sites	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	no
Staff Meetings	yes	yes		yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

Administrators were important during the consolidation process and three strategies that enhanced the process for them were significant during the eight consolidations. The strategies included pre-consolidation administrative appointments, job security, and consolidation plan input. Pre-consolidation administrative appointments enhanced organizational stability. The administrative appointments established a chain of command and eased decision-making issues. Job security was enhanced through pre-consolidation administrative appointments. Those administrators not accepting the positions offered them by the boards of education were compensated eighty percent of their salary for one year plus the option to secure other employment and still receive the payment. Input on the plans to consolidate was a significant strategy utilized to enhance the consolidation process for the administrators. Teacher placement, curriculum programs, and student activities were just some of the decisions administrators helped to make. Table 13 identifies significant strategies which were utilized for administrators.

TABLE 13

SIGNIFICANT STRATEGIES USED TO ENHANCE THE CONSOLIDATION PROCESS FOR ADMINISTRATORS

	Consolidation 1	Consolidation 2	Consolidation 3	Consolidation 4	Consolidation 5	Consolidation 6	Consolidation 7	Consolidation 8
Pre-Consolidation Administrative Appointments	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Job Security	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Consolidation Plan Input	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

Successful strategies utilized to enhance the consolidation process for board members included five that were evident in all eight consolidations. Joint board meetings, consolidation plans, community meetings, pre-consolidation board member selection agreements, and State Department advisement were significant strategies throughout the voluntary consolidations. Joint board meetings and community meetings were means of sharing information and discussing issues with the patrons of the communities. State Department personnel and others experienced in school consolidations were often in attendance. Pre-consolidation board member selection agreements enhanced decision-making during the consolidations, as well as, enhanced organizational stability. The board approved consolidation plans provided direction and focus for the board members when making consolidation process decisions. Table 14 outlines the strategies that were most significant in enhancing the consolidation process for board members.

TABLE 14

SIGNIFICANT STRATEGIES USED TO ENHANCE THE CONSOLIDATION PROCESS FOR BOARD MEMBERS

	Consolidation 1	Consolidation 2	Consolidation 3	Consolidation 4	Consolidation 5	Consolidation 6	Consolidation 7	Consolidation 8
Joint Board Meetings	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Consolidation Plan	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Community Meetings	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Board Member Selection Agreements	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
State Department Advisement	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

Strategies that were not productive were situational and dependent upon many variables. Leadership styles of the boards and superintendents, politics within the schools and communities, and the demographics of the communities and the districts all played significant roles in the consolidation processes. A strategy indicated as nonproductive by one superintendent may have been essential in another consolidation. Those strategies presented as not productive included forced consolidations, removing school memorabilia, relocating administrative furniture, creating seven-member boards, community meetings, school name and mascot agreements, closing schools, the State Department's feasibility studies, and job security for teachers. Three of the strategies presented as nonproductive were

TABLE 15

SIGNIFICANT STRATEGIES USED THAT WERE NOT PRODUCTIVE

	Consolidation 1	Consolidation 2	Consolidation 3	Consolidation 4	Consolidation 5	Consolidation 6	Consolidation 7	Consolidation 8
Community Meetings					yes			yes
School Closings						yes		yes
State Department Feasibility Study						yes	yes	

evident in more than one consolidation. These included community meetings, closing schools, and the feasibility studies submitted by the State Department of Education. Table 15 illustrates the strategies reported from more than one consolidation as being nonproductive.

CONCLUSIONS

School consolidation has been a tool for school improvement for over 100 years (Rosenfield and Sher, 1977). It will in all probability continue to be encouraged and financially rewarded by state and local governments. Yet, patrons fear a loss of community identity without their school. This study has identified thirteen successful strategies that, if implemented appropriately, can facilitate rural school consolidation and enhance the overall process for teachers, parents and the community, students, support staffs, administrators, and board members. Table 16 identifies the thirteen strategies and the voluntary consolidations in which they were utilized.

Job security was the number one issue for teachers, administrators, and support staffs in each of the voluntary consolidations studied. Administrators and

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support staffs were guaranteed their positions in all eight of the consolidations, while five of the new districts retained their entire teaching staff. In those that reduced teachers, the superintendents indicated that apprising teachers of their future early in the process was most advantageous. Also, placing those teachers' names hired by the consolidated district in school board minutes enhanced the process.

TABLE 16

STRATEGIES THAT FACILITATE
AND ENHANCE THE CONSOLIDATION PROCESS

	Consolidation 1	Consolidation 2	Consolidation 3	Consolidation 4	Consolidation 5	Consolidation 6	Consolidation 7	Consolidation 8
Job Security	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
Employee Displacement Compensation			yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	
Staff Meetings	yes	yes	yes	yes		yes	yes	yes
Maintain All Sites	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	no
Community Meetings	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Media Releases	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Expanded Curriculum and Activity Opportunities	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Joint Student-body Activities	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	
Pre-Consolidation Administrative Appointments	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Joint Board Meetings	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Consolidation Plan	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
State Department Advisement	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Board Member Selection Agreements	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

Employee displacement compensation further enhanced the consolidation process. The superintendents in five of the consolidations indicated that displaced employees were offered eighty percent of their salary for one year plus the opportunity to secure another job. This strategy may have relieved the personal anxiety felt by those employees losing their jobs due to the consolidation.

In seven consolidations staff meetings were utilized to enhance the process. Teachers, support people, and administrators should be kept informed. The most efficient means may be through faculty meetings in which employees have an opportunity to ask questions. Communication proved vital to the success of the consolidation process.

Maintaining all of the sites was another strategy that greatly enhanced the consolidation process. Patrons, students, and staff members all have a viable stake in maintaining the school. While only six of the eight consolidations were able to keep all of their sites open, this strategy enhances the process for most stakeholders and is a key element to a successful consolidation process.

Data from all eight of the consolidations studied revealed that community meetings were utilized to enhance the consolidation process. Community meetings are a productive means of sharing information with interested patrons. Open meetings allow two-way communication and an opportunity for community members to ask questions of school officials. Accurate information is vital to a consolidation process and this strategy can help ensure that parents are well informed and that the information they are receiving is factual.

Media releases were useful in all eight of the consolidations studied. Newspaper articles were the most common form of media releases utilized, but radio and television were also used in unique situations. The media is crucial to a successful school consolidation. The timely dispersion of accurate, factual information can calm the nerves of stakeholders anxious over what effects a

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change in their school may bring. The media can be utilized to report consolidation plans, meeting agendas, dates and times, election information, and/or letters of support through editorials. Letters from supportive patrons can also be published in the newspaper to further enhance the consolidation process.

The primary focus of school consolidation should be to expand the curricular and activity opportunities for students. Superintendents involved in all eight of the consolidations cautioned others that if the decisions made during a consolidation process are not made for the children, then they are made for the wrong reasons. Immediate financial advantages were not necessarily gained by all of the consolidated districts, but every district expanded the curricular offerings and enhanced the activity opportunities for their students. Consolidations which focus on the students are difficult to dispute. Stating these views early facilitates the process.

Joint student-body activities can greatly facilitate a consolidation process. Attitudes of students are a major influence on parents and the community. Through joint activities students begin to feel more relaxed with new teachers, administrators, and peers. Such activities may include athletic ventures, student council meetings, dances, academic teams, assemblies, and/or meals together. Superintendents participating in this study indicated that students were the least of their problems during the consolidations and that activities designed to bring them together were viewed as one of the primary reasons for success in this area.

There are several reasons that pre-consolidation administrative appointments are important to a consolidation process. Job security for administrators is one, but beyond that, organizational stability, an established chain of command, and the essential beginnings of developing a vision for the new district are vital. Leadership within the organization should be announced early in the process in order to provide stakeholders the confidence that the consolidation will work. Pre-consolidation administrative appointments were utilized in all eight of the consolidations studied.

Joint board meetings were also utilized in all of the consolidations. Joint board meetings provided many opportunities that facilitated the process. Board members were able to address issues and concerns together. Others experienced in school consolidation advised the joint groups, and patrons were allowed opportunity to voice their opinions through joint school board meetings. Other agenda areas covered during the meetings included tours of facilities, opportunity for State Department advisement, student input, and joint executive sessions. Joint board meetings can provide accurate information to patrons and are critical to a successful consolidation process.

A well written consolidation plan, approved by both boards, can enhance a consolidation process. All of the superintendents involved in this study helped develop a plan, had it approved by both boards, and focused on it during the consolidation process. The consolidation plans provided direction for school officials and eased their decision-making. Fears of stakeholders fueled from not knowing what may happen next were alleviated by the announcements of the consolidation plans. Consolidation plans made available to patrons and then carried through as written are most effective.

State Department assistance was evident in all eight of the voluntary consolidations studied. Feasibility studies, participation in board meetings, and consolidation plan input were some of the means by which the State Department of Education facilitated the consolidations. State Department personnel also attended staff meetings and community meetings. The State Department's feasibility study addressed personnel issues, transportation needs, and the financial status of the districts. Federal programs, such as child nutrition, special education, and Title I, were also outlined in the studies. Feasibility studies provided a projected outline of the consolidated districts internal programs. No district should pursue a consolidation without utilizing the expertise and experience offered by the State Department of Education.

In the eight consolidations studied, pre-consolidation board member selection agreements were utilized. The means by which the board members were selected differed, but the strategy of naming the board members of the new district before the consolidation election remained constant. This strategy is important to the stability of the organization, the efficiency of decision-making, and the confidence in the overall process. Pre-selected board members provide an avenue for constituents to voice their concerns and support for the consolidation. Naming the new board members should be done early in the process, allowing them time to appoint their chief administrator and then support his efforts in providing a successful merger of the school districts.

School consolidation continues as the most important concern for many rural communities and rural schools in America (DeYoung and Howley, 1992). The thirteen strategies outlined in Table 16 were successfully utilized in eight selected voluntary consolidations in Oklahoma since the passage of H.B. 1017 to enhance the consolidation process. These strategies, if implemented appropriately, can alleviate the fears of stakeholders and provide for a more collegial, efficient school consolidation. The availability of reliable strategies which enhance the consolidation process and the assurance that these strategies have been researched and documented provides some relief to an otherwise stressful experience. Although consolidation is an outcome of many school reform efforts, how much it has actually improved schools is still being debated. However, once the decision to consolidate

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has been made, the strategies identified by this study could play a major role in providing an efficient, collegial, and productive process. "Win-Win" strategies are difficult to construct, but in the case of school consolidation, it can be done. This research provides useful guidance for any rural superintendent who undertakes a school consolidation. Hopefully, if a consolidation does take place, whether it be voluntary or involuntary, the ultimate beneficiaries are the students of the districts involved in the consolidation. And of that, only time will tell.

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The Role of Rural Counselors:
Their Needs and Challenges to Providing Prevention

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National youth behavioral indicators reflect a state of emergency (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 1996; CDC, 1995) and school counselors have been called upon to more actively assist in meeting their health needs (Kolbe et al., 1997). Many of these preventable health-compromising behaviors (risky sex, substance abuse, gang-related violence, and sensation-seeking injuries) are no longer exclusively urban problems. This research study, funded by the University of New Mexico, sought to identify the degree to which rural middle and high school counselors perceive these problems in their communities, the differences between rural and urban counselors in relation to their professional responsibilities, and the preparedness of these counselors to address the identified risky behaviors.

Method

All middle and high school public school counselors in the State of New Mexico were mailed a 51-item questionnaire using the Total Design Method (Dillman, 1978) (n=248; reponse rate=67 percent). The instrument was developed by the authors for the expressed purpose of measuring perceptions of the identified health-compromising behaviors, counselor self-efficacy in addressing those behaviors, counselor roles and responsibilities, and demographic and work-related information.

Results

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was computed to assess the impact the size of school district had upon counselor perceptions of the problem behaviors. It was found that urban (over 2000 students in school district) and rural (between 500 and 1,999 students) school districts had a significantly higher perception of the health compromising behaviors than the frontier (less than 500 students) districts. Using the Chi square test of independence, it was determined that more counselors in the smaller school districts (rural and frontier) spend significantly more time in administration and other duties that took time away from counseling. This finding is critical when coupled with the study outcome that counselors who spend more time counseling students had a greater sense of efficacy in professionally addressing adolescent health compromising behaviors.

Discussion and Implications

This study is significant because it clarifies that the problems traditionally considered to be exclusively "urban" in nature, have moved to the rural settings. Unfortunately, rural counselors are less able to respond to these increasingly prevalent problems due to professional demands that require them to conduct administrative rather than counseling duties. With this shift in workplace responsibilities, these counselors are less likely to feel efficacious in addressing the identified health compromising behaviors. For counselors to play a significant role in preventing substance abuse, risky sexual behaviors, gang-related violence and sensation-seeking injuries, their roles of counselor must be redefined so that they are able to provide direct services to the youth as opposed to the administration.

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ADOLESCENT RISK-TAKING SURVEY

Please rate each of the following statements on a scale of 1 (you strongly agree with the item) to 5 (you firmly disagree with the item). Each remark is worded a little differently, consequently it is important that you read each statement very carefully so your response is an accurate reflection of your opinion. When you are certain you understand the item circle the number that best matches your belief. Please be sure to respond to every item. Do not leave any items blank. Your answers will help us understand what school counselors feel are important issues in their work with students. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential!

	Strongly Agree	Agree		Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Substance abuse is a serious problem for adolescents in our society	1	2	3	4	5
2. Teen violence, gangs or delinquency is not a grave problem for our society	1	2	3	4	5
3. Risky sexual behavior is a critical problem for adolescents in our society	1	2	3	4	5
4. Sensation-seeking or accidents are a tremendous problem for adolescents in our society	1	2	3	4	5
5. Substance abuse is not a critical problem for adolescents in your community	1	2	3	4	5
6. Substance abuse is not a critical problem for adolescents in your school	1	2	3	4	5
7. Teen violence, gangs, or delinquency are a serious problem for your community	1	2	3	4	5
8. Teen violence, gangs, or delinquency are a serious problem for your school	1	2	3	4	5
9. Risky sexual behavior is not a grave problem for adolescents in your community	1	2	3	4	5
10. Risky sexual behavior is not a grave problem for adolescents in your school	1	2	3	4	5
11. Sensation-seeking or accidents are a serious problem for adolescents in your community	1	2	3	4	5
12. Sensation-seeking or accidents are a serious problem for adolescents in your school	1	2	3	4	5
13. I have personally encountered a large number of adolescent substance abuse problems	1	2	3	4	5
14. I have not personally been impacted by teen violence, gangs, or delinquency	1	2	3	4	5
15. Risky sexual behavior by adolescents has seriously impacted me personally	1	2	3	4	5
16. I have been seriously impacted by sensation-seeking or accidents by adolescents	1	2	3	4	5
17. My college education taught me a lot about interventions for adolescent substance abuse	1	2	3	4	5
18. My college education taught me little about interventions for adolescent gangs and delinquency	1	2	3	4	5
19. My college education taught me a large amount about intervention for risky sexual behavior by adolescents?	1	2	3	4	5
20. I learned a great deal about interventions for sensation-seeking by adolescents in my college education	1	2	3	4	5
21. I learned a substantial amount about adolescent substance abuse from in-services and other forms of professional development	1	2	3	4	5
22. I learned a significant amount about adolescent gangs and delinquency from in-services and other forms of professional development	1	2	3	4	5

23 I participated in many inservices and other forms of professional development opportunities where I learned a lot about risky sexual behavior by adolescents 1..........2..........3..........4..........5

24 I learned very little about adolescent sensation-seeking from in-services and other forms of professional development 1..........2..........3..........4..........5

25 It is very important for me to learn more about adolescent substance abuse 1..........2..........3..........4..........5

26 I don't believe it is important or for necessary for me to learn more about adolescent delinquency and gangs 1..........2..........3..........4..........5

27 I think it is very important for me to learn more about risky sexual behavior among adolescents 1..........2..........3..........4..........5

28 Learning more about adolescent sensation seeking is very important to me 1..........2..........3..........4..........5

29 I am not very capable and or confident in providing information and basic intervention for adolescent substance abuse 1..........2..........3..........4..........5

30 I feel very capable and/or confident in my ability to provide information and basic intervention for adolescent gangs violence, or delinquency 1..........2..........3..........4..........5

31 I believe that I am capable and confident in providing information and basic intervention for adolescents engaged in high risk sexual behavior 1..........2..........3..........4..........5

32 I am capable and or confident in my ability to provide information and basic intervention for adolescent sensation-seeking 1..........2..........3..........4..........5

Please indicate the number of times a year you or your school(s) does the following:

33 Presents substance abuse prevention programming to students ______

34 Present gang or delinquency prevention programming to students ______

35 Offer high risk sexual behavior prevention programming to students ______

36 Present sensation-seeking prevention programming to students ______

37 Conduct individual interventions with adolescents abusing drugs ______

38 Do individual interventions with adolescents involved in gangs, violence, or delinquency ______

39 Do individual interventions with adolescents engaged in high risk sexual behavior ______

40 Perform individual interventions with adolescents engaged in sensation-seeking ______

Please tell us a little bit about yourself and your work.

41 I am male female

42 I am ______ years old

43 My ethnic background is

Caucasian Hispanic Native American African American Asian Other

44 Approximately ______ (number) people live in the community in which the school(s) I work at are located

45 I have earned the following degrees (circle all that apply)

Bachelor's Master's Ph.D

46 I have earned ______ (number) of graduate education credits

47 I have been employed as a school counselor for ______ years

Nagel, L, Scherer, D. and W. Lee (1996)

Principals' Ability to Implement "Best Practices" In Early Childhood

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Principals' Ability to Implement Best Practices in Early Childhood

In recent years a number of public policy positions and statements have been issued (NAEYC, 1997; NAESP, 1990; NAEYC & NAECSSSDE, 1990, NEGP, 1995) focusing attention on the education of young children from birth through age eight. These documents share a recognition of the efficacy of quality early childhood programs to not only have a positive effect on young children's schooling, but to have an impact on their lives well into adulthood. Although schools and the general public have reaped the benefits from such programs as Head Start, they have only sporadically instituted congruent and continuous early childhood programming through the primary grades.

Research on Developmentally Appropriate Practices

Basic to the field of early childhood education is the recognition that young children through age eight possess a unique way of knowing and learning that must be responded to with teaching strategies different from those employed with older elementary children. Early childhood educators are committed to interactionist and constructivist theories which incorporate an active learning environment in which the child engages in learning with concrete materials and meaningful experiences. In contrast to a behaviorist approach, the approach of early childhood educators is holistic and integrated. Among the strategies indicated by an integrated approach to learning are a learning center approach, large time blocks for project work, self-initiated learning and discovery, and play. In this approach, the arts, children's friendships, and leaning appropriate classroom behavior are as much a part of the curriculum as are mathematics and learning to read. Further, standardized test are regarded as inadequate measures of children's learning.

There appear to be numerous benefits related to the implementation of developmentally appropriate practices, including increased creativity (Hirsh-Pasek, 1991), less test anxiety and fewer stress behaviors (Bently & Wilson, 1989; Burts, et al., 1992; Burts, Hart, Charlesworth & Kirk, 1990), and higher competencies in language and social development (Whitebook, Howes, Phillips & Pemberton, 1989). In addition, young children in developmentally appropriate classrooms appear better able to take responsibility for their own learning than children in academically directed classrooms (Marcon, 1992).

Rural Schools' Problems and Opportunities

Administrators play a key role in assuring quality early childhood education. They serve as instructional leaders and facilitators for change (Dwyer, 1985). They are largely responsible for hiring qualified personnel for teaching positions. Through their professional memberships and interpretations of research, they have a direct effect on the quality of instruction that teachers are able to provide (Chance, 1991). Rutherford (1985) asserts that effective principals have clear, informed visions of what they want their schools to become and can translate those visions into goals and experiences.

Small, isolated school have unique leadership advantages and problems (Hill, 1993; Schmuck, R. & Schmuck, P., 1992; Williams, 1990). Some of the advantages include more latitude in shaping programs with fewer to convince, more fluent and informal communication networks both within schools and community, and less formal structure, making change smoother and quicker (Hill, 1993). However, some of the same advantages may lead to problems. Small community networking can lead to "gossip" and second-guessing leadership decisions with easier "community uprising" at change (Hill, 1993).

Other problems associated with rural school leadership include identical national and state expectancies regardless of school size, fewer monetary, materials and training resources, multiple roles and school sites resulting in separation and travel, little direct feedback from supervisors, high turnover of administrators, and isolation from peers (Spiropulos, 1996; Hill, 1993; McRobbie, 1990).

In a study of 80 small schools in 21 states, Schmuck and Schmuck (1992), concluded the biggest problems were social and emotional. Teachers and administrators in isolated, rural schools were overworked and frustrated. School structure was authoritarian with little joint planning, sharing of ideas or peer coaching. Although classroom sizes were small, there was little interactive instruction. Indeed, they found 80% of instruction to be unidirectional lecturing. The one grade level in which teaching was interactive was kindergarten.

Williams (1990) found teacher attitudes and tradition to be the biggest impediments of change. She suggests that success in moving a rural school toward more appropriate practices calls for a broad range of support that include retraining of teachers with courses, workshops, conferences and site observations,the purchase of new materials, peer coaching, and support from district personnel and the community.

Purpose of the Study

This paper reviews the results of a two-part investigation of Idaho's elementary school principals' beliefs regarding developmentally appropriate early childhood practices in kindergarten through grade three.

In the first phase of the study (French, Peña, Lambert, & Jensen, 1995) all elementary school principals in the largely rural state of Idaho were surveyed to determine their level of agreement with developmentally appropriate practices related to assessment, teacher qualifications, and developmentally appropriate teaching strategies. Results of phase one indicated that principals generally expressed a somewhat tepid, moderate agreement with developmentally appropriate practices. In addition, results suggested that principals from smaller rural districts showed even less support for certain components of best practice.

In the second phase of the study, which is the primary focus of this report, the smallest, more isolated rural schools were surveyed to further investigate issues related to effective implementation of best practices in early childhood classrooms. The smaller schools included in the second study were limited to those school districts located 35 miles or more away from a college or university, with fewer than 2,500 students. The study was designed to investigate components of developmentally appropriate practices that pose problems, reasons why they are problematic, and resources needed to implement a developmental approach to teaching young children in pre-kindergarten classes through grade three.

Method

Sixty-nine percent (55) of the 76 principals in small isolated school districts responded to a survey that addressed problematic areas of developmentally appropriate practices. In addition, sixteen schools that represented all geographic regions of the state were selected for on-site visits. The interviews with principals further explored findings of the initial survey and focused on leadership style, teacher dispositions and beliefs, and community character. Classroom observations and talks with teachers completed the on-site investigation.

Results

Statistical analysis of the responses to the survey instrument showed that principals believe the greatest factors influencing the implementation of a developmental approach to teaching young children were teacher beliefs (89%), parent expectations (87%), teacher dispositions (82%), principal beliefs (79%), teacher satisfaction (78%), supervisor expectations (74%) and school board and on-going training (72%).

On site interviews with sixteen principals revealed that virtually all these principals expressed a high desire to see a developmental approach to teaching young children in kindergarten, while 50% expressed the same desire for children in grade two. Principals indicated that problematic areas related to developmentally appropriate practices included organization of the schedule to include large blocks of time for in-depth work, methods that may be perceived by the community to not include enough skill development, and the need to support standardized testing. The majority of principals reported their leadership style to be democratic with a site-based management philosophy that serves to inspire and support teachers in their work.

In two of the sixteen small rural schools visited, an especially high level of teaching principles and strategies closely matching definitions of developmentally appropriate practices were applied. These two schools and their principals had made changes with the help of grant money, and had utilized multiple resources, varied training structures for teachers, communication with parents and other district personnel, and had implemented a democratic open leadership style. Model programs such as these, adhering to developmentally appropriate practices, can be implemented in rural schools. Research does support both academic and social-emotional benefits over time. The philosophy about how young children learn and resultant best teaching practices are based in sound, core early childhood principles, most of which do not take additional funds to implement. These two school stand out, not only to the seasoned educator, but to the community populace. Students and adults deserve more of this type of learning environment.

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The TeleLearning and Rural Education Centre: Macro and Micro Dimensions of Small School Research

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Abstract

The **TeleLearning and Rural Education Centre** was established in January 1997 at Memorial University of Newfoundland in Canada, in one of the most sparsely populated and economically depressed areas of the country. Of the 462 schools in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, 66% are classified as rural and more than 50% have enrolments of under 200 students. The **Centre** was established to address the educational needs of these small rural schools and improve the quality of educational services to rural communities. These goals will be accomplished through a variety of research and development projects and activities, the outcomes of which will not only serve Newfoundland communities but also those in other national and international contexts. The **TeleLearning and Rural Education Centre** acknowledges the long-standing relationship between rural and distance education which it has formalized in the application of telelearning specifically for geographically isolated classrooms. A major research focus of the Centre at both macro and micro levels involves the exploration of teaching, learning, management and policy issues in small schools in rural areas. At the macro level telelearning in small rural schools is being pursued through research relationships with partners in New Zealand, Australia, Finland, Iceland and Scotland. At the micro level research and development work is being undertaken in several rural school districts of Newfoundland and Labrador. The progress of rural educational reform in the province over the last five years has been closely monitored. Particular attention has been paid to issues surrounding "school viability" and the combative, informed resistance of rural citizens to government's efforts to close small community schools. The **Centre** has initiated a major initiative in developing pedagogical approaches for rural schools with multi-grade or multiage classrooms. Other teaching and learning initiatives include creating new media resources for effective teaching, and, in partnership with a rural test-site school, exploring effective ways of integrating new technologies into mathematics and science classrooms. The micro dimension of the Centre's research highlights those aspects of small school pedagogy which have particular application to the multi-media environment. The macro research dimension will focus on the development of virtual classes to link teachers and learners in small schools regardless of location.

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> *Imagine for a moment a developed nation, which regarded its rural schools as its elite and as models to be envied and emulated by metropolitan schools. Imagine a system in which rural schools were the prime beneficiaries of educctional research, the recipients of a steady stream of the nation's best educators, and the bastions of the education world's power prestige, and resources.* - Jonathan Sher (1983)

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to describe some aspects of the research and development work that will be pursued by the newly created **TeleLearning and Rural Education Centre** at Memorial University, located in Canada's most easterly province, Newfoundland and Labrador. The rural nature of the province presents a unique opportunity to do specialized work in the field of rural education and small, isolated schools. Sixty percent (60%) of all schools are officially classified as rural; fifty percent (50%) of the 472 schools in the province have less than 200 students. Sixty-five (65) of these schools have less than 50 students and only 14% of our schools have a student population of more than 400 (Mulcahy, 1996a)

The establishment of the **TeleLearning and Rural Education Centre** early in 1997, the first of its kind in Canada, is an important step forward for Newfoundland and Labrador. It sends a clear signal to the people of the province that the university recognizes, in a significant way, the number of rural schools in the province and indicates its commitment to working on their behalf. It is intended that the **Centre** will provide a focus and meeting place for all those with an interest in pursuing research and development work in Rural Education and TeleLearning studies. Newfoundland and Labrador is not unique in having a large percentage of rural schools. Other Canadian provinces and territories, many US states, many parts of the UK, especially Northern Scotland and Wales, and Australia and New Zealand face similar challenges in the provision of educational services to rural and isolated communities. One important role for the centre is to establish and maintain contacts with individual scholars and organizations in other places who have a special interest in Rural Education and TeleLearning.

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In 1996 the **First National Rural Education Congress** was held in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Organized by the SELU, College of Education, University of Saskatchewan, this was the first time that a national conference on rural education had been organized in Canada. Plans were made at this conference to create a national organization for those interested in rural education. Following the model of the NREA in the United States, this organization will be open to everyone: university researchers, K-12 educators, school board personnel and parent groups and organizations. The second annual conference was held again in Saskatoon in February 1997. At that time intensive discussions took place aimed at the development of a Canadian Rural Education Association (CREA). The Centre of Rural Education and TeleLearning will work closely with this organization and promote its agenda for the national development of rural education in Canada.

A Research Tradition

Research and scholarly writing on rural education in Newfoundland and Labrador has been a tradition within the Faculty of Education at Memorial University and other district and school based educators in the province. Ishmael Baksh and Amarjit Singh (1977; 1979; 1980) did pioneering work in this area with their studies of teaching and learning in small rural communities in Newfoundland. In 1987 Frank Riggs completed a major investigation of educational provision in small rural schools in the province (Riggs, 1987). Emerging from this comprehensive review were a number of very significant recommendations that continue to provide direction for rural education and schooling. A record of some of the other significant work that contributes to our understanding of rural education in Newfoundland can be found in back issues of the *Morning Watch* see especially Vol.1,no.3) and *Society and Education in Newfoundland* Volume I & II (edited by A.Singh & I. Baksh). The former Newfoundland Teachers Association's *Journal* and the current *NLTA Prism* also contain important contributions to the research base that the new **Centre** will build on. "Dealing with individual differences in reading in a one-room school" by Lary Sipe, a district level literacy consultant, was published in the Summer edition of *NTA Journal* in 1974 is a good example of rural educators in the field attempting to share their experiences and expertise with their small school colleagues. More recently, Jean Brown published an article entitled "Grandy's River Collegiate: Can a Rural School Survive in an Urban Landscape?" in the *Alberta Journal of Education* (Brown, 1996).

A number of teachers in the province have completed Masters' Theses which focused on rural issues. Among those are: Smith (1988) "A whole language approach to literacy in a four/five multi-grade classroom;" Barr-Bailet (1995) "An examination of the provision for science education in small rural schools:" Vincent (1995)" Making the transition from small school to larger school: The student's perspective", Howard (1996) "An investigation of a sample of small schools that consistently performed above the provincial norm on standardized tests" and Ryan (1996) "The capabilities of teachers in small rural primary schools to deliver a new French program that assumes a high level of oral competency on the part of the teacher."

A Macro Dimension of Small Schools Research - An International View

(by Ken Stevens)

Small school research usually takes place in rural areas. Small, rural schools are of particular interest to educators in many developed countries at the present time for the ways in which they use information and communication technologies to access educational services and, thereby, increase educational opportunities for geographically isolated people. In many remote areas of developed societies, small rural schools have embraced new communication technologies to extend the curriculum, interface with one another and, ultimately, safe guard their continued viability. Many of these small and geographically isolated institutions are now in a position to provide leadership to other schools in the application of converging information and communication technologies in the curriculum, in the management of virtual classes and in the development of new ways of teaching and learning.

In conditions of extreme geographical isolation in the interior of Australia, the north of Canada and the northern regions of the Nordic countries, information and communication technologies supplement and, increasingly, replace traditional distance education (Kronlund 1995); Kynaslahti and Salminen 1995; Salminen, 1995, Stevens, 1991,1993, 1994f,1995a,1995c; Stevens and Kynaslahti 1996). In smaller developed countries with significant rural populations such as Iceland and New Zealand, many small rural schools have developed regional or national telelearning networks from which they are able to both access and deliver educational services (Stevens,1995b, 1995d; Stevens, Kynaslahti and Salminen 1996).

Distance education has had a long association with the provision of education in rural areas. Through distance education many people have had their educational and vocational opportunities enhanced and their life chances extended (Stevens and Mason, 1994c; Stevens and McSwan, 1995e). For many people, distance education is the provision of rural education from an urban area. Most distance education is provided from centralized locations from which educational materials, mostly print-based, are distributed to dispersed learners. There has, of course, been considerable experimentation by distance educators in using information and communication technologies, including public radio and television channels, to reach young people and their parents who, for a variety of reasons, mostly related to the location of their homes, cannot attend schools on a daily basis.

Telelearning builds on distance education but places greater emphasis on computer-generated interaction between teacher and students, (and between students themselves), using the Internet, E-mail and, to an increasingly extent, specially constructed Intranets (Stevens, 1997). An outcome of the advent of telelearning has been the creation of virtual classes (Stevens, 1996, 1997 in press; Stevens and Kynaslahti, 1996). Virtual classes can be constructed over very dispersed locations and can be either synchronous or asynchronous, depending in part on the number of time zones that separate teachers and learners. As information and communication technologies develop and converge and are incorporated into classrooms, many educators become teleteachers and many learners become telelearners.

The Telelearning and Rural Education Centre is in the process of formalizing teaching and learning links to schools in New Zealand, Australia, Finland and Scotland. The purpose of this is to extend both teaching and learning for all participating schools and to provide advantages for teachers and learners at all sites. The Centre has developed collaborative links between a test site school in rural Newfoundland and a small school in the North Island of New Zealand in the teaching of Biology to senior students. At Clarenville High School in Newfoundland, Canada and at Piopio College in New Zealand students and their teachers can each benefit from collaborative teaching and learning opportunities. The school at Clarenville is the Telelearning and Rural Education test-site for technology and pedagogy and is likely to become an integral part of the Faculty of Education. The school is located about two hours from the Memorial University and has an enrolment of approximately 55O students between years nine and twelve. It is anticipated that Clarenville High School will link with the fourteen other schools in its district as well as with many schools in other parts of the province, in providing access to courses not locally available. It is further expected that Clarenville High School will become a centre for the provision of technological expertise to other schools. The networking of schools is well-developed in New Zealand, Australia, Iceland and Finland (Stevens 1994a, 1994d, 1994f, 1995d, 1997) and plans are being made to form electronic links with selected institutions in these places from Newfoundland. Using contemporary information and communication technologies, small schools in dispersed sites throughout the world can interface with one another to form virtual classes.

Piopio College is a smaller school than Clarenville High School, with an enrolment of approximately 330 students. It is located in the central North Island of New Zealand and most students travel to it each day on buses from farms in outlying areas, in some cases, over long distances. The school serves a population that is almost entirely engaged in either dairy or sheep and cattle farming.

The majority of schools in Newfoundland are classified as rural and almost all are located on the coast. There are, accordingly, many opportunities for the Newfoundland students to learn about marine life and environments. In New Zealand, however, many small schools, like Piopio College, are not near the sea and students do not have the opportunity to undertake marine studies as part of their Biology courses. It is anticipated that the links that are being put in place between Clarenville and Piopio will extend the marine biological studies of the New Zealand students and, at the same time, provide their peers in Newfoundland with access to South Pacific flora and fauna.

It has already been found that the ways in which Biology is taught in the two schools differs considerably. In Newfoundland, students are required to attend school on a daily basis for instruction in classrooms. In the New Zealand school, students of senior Biology are required to work from home each Thursday, using their modems to log on to the Piopio College network from their homes. Senior New Zealand Biology students at Piopio College are in this way encouraged to develop independent ways of learning and to focus of field-based studies of flora and fauna. This has been of considerable interest to teachers in Clarenville who have begun using science materials from the New Zealand school off the Internet.

At the present time, the schools in Clarenville and Piopio are considering ways in which it is appropriate to work together, particularly in the teaching of mathematics and social studies.

At the regional level in New Zealand, small schools have been successfully integrated using electronic networks, providing increased educational opportunities (Stevens, 1995a). There are important equity issues in the continuation of this development. The current development of networking by some rural schools in New Zealand is providing a model for teaching, learning and the delivery of the curriculum that all schools are likely to have to consider in some way in the future. It is appropriate now to recognize the issues that are emerging from this new development, in particular, the educational significance of school size and location at a time when many small schools face the threat of closure. In Australia there has also been considerable use of new technologies to link small and remote schools as well as the national university system (Stevens, 1994a, 1994b, 1994d,1994e). There is at present considerable scope for research in the new, electronic and increasingly integrated environment in rural schools. It has been found that there is scope for using rural school practices in Canada in the development of rural education in Australia (Stevens, 1992).

A Micro Dimension of Small School Research

(A Personal View by Dennis Mulcahy)

When someone asks me now what my primary research interest is I reply "rural education." I used to say "small schools." However, I find that rural education is a more inclusive term for the range and scope of the issues and questions I am interested in pursuing. More importantly it situates and identifies my work with a very specific context - rural communities. I have made this change for several reasons.

The first reason is rather obvious. As was indicated at the very beginning of this paper Newfoundland and Labrador is a primarily a rural province and a province of small rural schools. Thus, to be interested in small schools in Newfoundland and Labrador is to be interested in small **rural** schools. It is important to note that, while all but a few of the small schools are rural, not all rural schools are small. Because of many "successful" attempts at closure and consolidation there exists a fair number of larger schools (by provincial standards) located in rural communities. Small schools in urban areas are not the same as small schools in rural areas. The small private school in St. John's, the capital city, has little of consequence in common with a school the same size located in an isolated fishing community on the south coast of the island.

A second reason for emphasizing "rural" was not so obvious to me when I began work in rural education studies. However, I am becoming convinced that it is the unique features and characteristics of the rural context that give primary definition and direction to that work. I do not think I can make a contribution to improving education in rural communities if I do not understand and appreciate the strengths and challenges associated with living in rural areas. Coming to this realization has both complicated and enriched the nature of my research. It would be simpler to ignore the context but to do so would make anything I do less valid.

I am still struggling to understand the rural context and its implications for education and schooling in Newfoundland and Labrador. Part of the challenge here is the sheer diversity of that context. In Canada, rural communities are defined by default. *Statistics Canada* gives an urban designation to all communities with a population of 5,000 of more. All others by default are classified as rural. Newfoundland and Labrador follows this model as well. Thus included in this general category are communities that differ quite substantially, and for research and development purposes, quite significantly, in population. Such a crude indicator gives no information about the degree of isolation or remoteness; nor does it tell us anything about the infrastructure of the community or the services that might be available in the community or nearby. In terms of infrastructure one of the most important considerations is basic tele-communications connectivity. Existing and emerging information technologies are increasingly making the size and location of rural schools irrelevant to their capability of providing a broad range of course offerings. It is no longer valid to close a rural school because it cannot offer the kinds of courses available in larger schools. Hence one the traditional perceived "problems" in rural schools now has a possible solution. However, many rural communities in this province do not have the necessary telephone lines to enable students and teachers to access the various services that are now available. Internet access is still problematic in many schools - often the very ones which need it the most. There is little point in suggesting technological solutions for small rural schools if the technology assumes an infrastructure that does not exist.

The socio-economic characteristics of rural Newfoundland and Labrador have to play a very prominent role in any investigation or discussion about educational provision and achievement. Our province is well known as the most economically depressed area of Canada. In many of our rural areas the depth of that economic depression is truly startling. Levels of unemployment exceed 70% in some instances. There are a significant number of families who are dependent on social assistance and many, many others who fit the category of the working poor. In addition the educational levels of the rural adult population is significantly lower than the national or the provincial urban average. Research has clearly and consistently demonstrated how these factors influence student achievement and participation in school. To evaluate student and school performance without taking these and other rural factors into consideration (which is what is done all the time in this province and elsewhere!) is to terribly distort the educational achievement of our rural educators. In terms of educational progress and human development many of our small rural schools emerge as some of best in the country when measured using a fair test.

Small schools benefit greatly from being situated in rural communities. Traditionally, rural parents and other members of the community have taken a great interest in their schools. There is much written about the special relationship that often exists between school and community in rural places (DeYoung, & Theobald, 1991). Unfortunately, this special bond between school and community is constantly under siege as government attempts to force more and more communities to give up their schools (Mulcahy, 1997a;19966c; DeYoung, & Howley, 1992). There is an emergent body of research data purporting to show that small schools have a positive effect on "at risk" children. The "at risk" factors focused on in these studies are those associated with socio-economic factors. The conclusion of these studies is that with student populations in economically depressed regions, a small school may provide these students with their best chance of success. Given the current economic conditions in rural Newfoundland and Labrador, closing our small rural schools may be the single worst thing we could do in the name of reform. Instead of improving matters for rural students we may in fact be condemning them to failure(Howley, 1996; Huang & Howley, 1993).

The umbrella term, Rural Education, also allows me to include in my areas of interest Native Education. The Micmac, Innu, Inuit and Metis populations of this province go to school and receive their education in the rural areas of this province. These unique culture groups add to the diversity that defines and enriches the rural context.

I feel that I have only scratched the surface in my attempt to understand the contextual realities of rural schooling in Newfoundland and Labrador. Mythology, nostalgia, sentimentality, stereotypes, outdated notions, misinformation, lack of information, and urban indifference create barriers that impede the search for knowledge. One thing is clear: to speak of rural Newfoundland and Labrador in generalities is to speak falsely. I have become very wary of anyone who attempts to make any general statement about rural Newfoundland or rural schools. A *typical* rural community does not exist.

The international field of rural education studies makes problematic all our traditional i.e. urban notions about education and schooling in rural communities. It suggests we need to re-think and re-evaluate whose interests are being served when centralized educational authorities set out to improve rural schools. Historically, rural education reform has always assumed that improving rural schools meant making them more like urban schools. This has resulted in the closure and consolidation of small community schools and various attempts to find ways of delivering an urban curriculum to rural students. Today, however, there is growing realization that rural education reform must proceed from a very different paradigm. The uniqueness of the context, the particular cultural and economic aspirations of rural citizens and the views of rural people must be the starting point for change. Perhaps, most important is the view that rural education change and improvement must, in the first interest, serve the needs of rural communities and rural children (Sher, 1995; Nachtigal, 1992). It is rural citizens who must be the prime decision makers as to what is best for their communities and their children. The role of the rural education studies should be to provide rural communities with the knowledge they need to make their own informed decisions about education and schooling.

To be involved in rural education is very challenging, rewarding and frustrating. This is a particularly difficult time for the rural areas of Newfoundland and Labrador. These regions of the province have always endured tough economic conditions and have somehow survived. The current period, however, is one of extreme crisis. The cod moratorium has threatened the continued existence of many rural communities. Even in those areas not directly affected by the moratorium en-employment is at an all-time high. Many people have left their home communities. The decline in population and school enrolment is dramatic in many areas. This, coupled with an on going erosion of rural services through an endless round of cutbacks and layoffs, has created grave concerns and doubts among the people about their futures. There is a sense of unease as people wait and wonder what is to happen next. There is also a conviction among many that the government's hidden (perhaps not so hidden) agenda is another round of resettlement. To have the task of providing and trying to improve education for the children of rural Newfoundland at such a time represents a daunting challenge. I have been following this developing situation closely with a particular interest in how this general condition is affecting the schools. I continue to admire and be impressed with our rural educators who struggle on a daily basis to provide quality learning experiences in communities under siege. One thing is very clear. We ignore this situation and its impact on education and schooling in this province at our peril.

This is the micro dimension or specific context of the **TeleLearning and Rural Education Centre.** However, the challenges presented by this context are not unlike those of other national and international contexts with similar socio-economic profiles. My work in rural education and the outcomes of that work are significant not just in Newfoundland but also to the wider rural education research community. In the concluding part of this section of the paper, I would like to outline some of the specific issues and questions I will continue to pursue through my invovlment in the **Centre**.

Policy Analysis

An important part of my ongoing work of the Centre will be rural education policy analysis (Mulcahy 1997a; 1997b; 1996a). As governments go through processes of reform and re-strutucturing they create policies and directives that impact directly and indirectly on rural education and schooling. In 1991 the government of Newfoundland and Labrador established a **Royal Commission of Inquiry.** The commission's published report, *Our Children Our Future*, made a number of recommendations that have both immediate and long-range implications for small and rural schools. For example, the commission recommended that "non-viable schools be targeted for closure and consolidations. Subsequent legislation, *Education Acts 1996 & 1997* and *School Acts 1996 &1997*, attempted to set viability criteria, define the parameters for "necessarily existent schools", and change student transportation regulations. As part of "reform" only the most isolated schools will qualify for any extra funding or the provision of distance education.

An important part of the work of the centre will be a critical analysis of government policies to determine their impact on rural communities and their schools. Included in this analysis will be an investigation of the extent to which such policies are supported by research data and to what extent they reflect particular ideologies(Mulcahy,1993d). Another important question related to this topic is to what degree are changes to education policies being used to force people to abandon their rural communities? Utilizing the national and international contacts that have been developed, comparative studies will also be conducted to determine similarities and differences across rural education contexts.

Community Resistance to School Closure

There is a long tradition of community protest and resistance in Newfoundland and Labrador to government's efforts to reform small schools out of existence (Mulcahy, 1997a; 1996c). The current era of reform (from 1992) has been a particularly difficult one for rural communities as the government seems more determined than ever to close and consolidate a significant number of small community schools. My research in this area has focused on the nature of the case parents make to sustain and preserve their community schools (Mulcahy, 1997a; 1996). I am particularly interested in how the "grass roots" perspective on how to improve rural education provision contrasts sharply with the "official" government view of reform. It is noteworthy that today's parent groups make a more informed use of research. They feel very strongly about their schools being closed, but their feelings are reinforced by facts and information gleamed from rural education researchers. In addition, most recently in Newfoundland and Labrador, several communities have successfully resorted to court actions to have district closure decisions reversed.

Rural communities offer an alternative paradigm for thinking about rural education reform (Nachtigal, 1992). It is a paradigm firmly rooted in a conviction that community based education and schooling is foundation upon which all improvements have to be constructed.

The Viability and the Value of Small Schools

The debate about the viability and value of small schools is both a perennial and universal issue in rural education studies. As Sher (1977) has pointed out, the "conventional wisdom" has always maintained that larger schools are better schools and are more cost effective to operate. However, research has consistently demonstrated that such claims are both problematic and questionable. Research that attempts to link school size to student achievement generally finds that when adjustments are made for key variables such as intelligence and socio-economic status little if any connection can made between student achievement and school size (Sher, 1977; Brown, K.G., & Martin, A.B., 1989; Gaulton & Patrick, 1990; Nachtigal, 1992). There is an equal body of research that questions whether or not substantial savings can be realized through school closures (Sher, 1977; Streifel, J., Foldesy, G. & Holman, D.H., 1991; Young, 1994).

Small school viability is a major issue of contention in Newfoundland and Labrador. Since 1992 the government has attempted to define viability guidelines that could be used as criteria to close small community schools. Rural communities have mounted a consistent effort to demonstrate that not only are small schools viable but that they provide a unique and a more supportive educational environment for young children, and especially for children who are at risk for socio-economic reasons.

I am currently involved in two projects that relate directly to the viability and value of small rural schools. Data is being collected from the ten school districts in an effort to determine the savings being realized through school closures this year (1997/98). Thirty-eight (38) small schools were closed this year, justified in large part on economic grounds. The purpose of this project is to test the validity of this justification. Savings realized from school closures will be measured against new costs incurred through increased bussing and repairs and renovations to the receiving schools. The final analysis of this project will also take into consideration the extra costs incurred by the parents and the non-economic costs borne by the children.

Small Schools and Socio-economically "at risk" students

"An Assessment of the Impact of School Location, Class Size and the Academic Achievement of Average and 'At Risk' Students" is a project I am pursuing with Dr. Gary Jeffrey, a colleague in the Faculty of Education. While the literature indicates that achievement scores in larger schools tend to be higher, it is not clear that this pattern applies equally to all students or that it applies to all age and socioeconomic groups (Galton and Patrick, 1990). It has also been noted that with small schools being increasingly at risk of closure, the implications of these closures for students with diverse special needs have not been closely reviewed.

Howley (1996), for example, states that "large schools and districts are associated with the lower achievement of impoverished students and higher achievement for the more affluent" (p.20). It is not clear that there is a simple relationship between children's academic performance and the setting in which that instruction takes place. For academically "at risk" students, more attention needs to be paid to the multiple factors (including the students' increased access to teachers who are knowledgeable about their needs, support structure, ability, interests and family situations) associated with academic success. This study will look at the natures of different sized schools and assess how various dimensions of school size and location relate to the academic performance of a range of categories of "at risk" children.

This study was designed to take advantage of an opportunity afforded by the coming together of a large number of experienced regular classroom teachers from both small and large and urban and rural settings. These teachers came together for summer school credit and upgrading courses. Feedback was sought from these teachers regrading their observations of how the needs of three groups of special needs children (socioeconomically at risk, special needs and more able students) were being met in their respective schools. The study is multidimensional in nature and seeks to collect information from a diverse range of front line service providers from a range of school districts and school sizes.

A questionnaire was designed which would sample teachers' views and allow these to be compared along multiple dimensions. Initially, teachers attending summer school 1997 at Memorial University were asked to voluntarily complete the questionnaire. Pending these results, additional teachers may be asked to participate.

Multi-grade classrooms and Multi-age Pedagogy

Fifty-percent of the schools in the province have less than 200 students and the majority of these have one or more classrooms in which teachers have responsibility for more than one grade level. In the very small schools three grade levels are not uncommon; in some a single teacher has responsibility for as many as 5 grade levels. Newfoundland and Labrador has always had a significant number of these multi-graded classrooms; however, over the last several years their numbers have increased in rural schools. This is partly because of declining enrolments and partly because of changes in government policies of teacher allocation to small rural schools.

The official attitude over the years towards multi-graded classrooms in the province has been somewhat negative. They have been perceived as an unfortunate necessity created by the continuing existence of small schools that could not or would not be closed or consolidated. In fact, in many closure efforts the existence of multi-grading or the possibility of having to create such classrooms was often used by education authorities as a weapon to convince rural communities to give up their community schools and bus their children to larger schools. This attitude remains to some extent even today.

Until fairly recently the existence of multi-graded schools and classrooms was all but ignored by most educational agencies in the province. Little if any assistance in the way of professional development or curricular guidance was available to teachers who had or would have in the future responsibility for multi-grade classrooms. The province's only teacher education institution, Memorial University, the provincial Department of Education, and the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers Association, have acted as if multi-grading no longer existed. On occasion, an individual school board would take the initiative to address the issue. Generally, however, most people acted as if all schools, urban and rural, were large enough to have single grade classrooms. (And if they weren't they should be!)

Since 1991, multi-grading in small rural schools has been one of the prime areas of my research and development work in rural education Mulcahy, 1991; 1992a; 1992b;1993c 1997b). I have attempted to document the number of multi-grade classrooms and the variety of grade combinations that exist. I have also investigated the challenging nature of multi-grading, from the teacher's point of view and the strategies used by experienced teachers to make such classrooms work. One thing that was very clear from this project and subsequent research was the expressed needs of teachers for direction and help in the area of pedagogy. In almost every encounter I had with a multi-grade teacher the conversation always came around to the lack of professional guidance.

One of the major projects I will be working on this year involves the development of an undergraduate course that is intended, in the first instance, to address the expressed professional needs of teachers in small rural schools in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. The course is designed for both experienced teachers currently working in small schools and new teachers currently completing their professional degree programs at the University. The approach I am taking with this course is to provide students with an introduction to multiage pedagogy. I chose this approach because I have come to believe that multiage pedagogy has enormous potential to facilitate teaching in those small rural schools that must of necessity combine grade and age levels.

The Impact of bussing on students' academic performance, their participation in school activities, and the quality of their lives

One of the great un-examined issues in rural education is student transportation. Millions of students are bussed in North American everyday, some considerable distances, at a cost of several billion dollars a year. Yet we know very little about the impact of the time and distance traveled on students lives and their performance and participation in schools (Fox, 1996; Jones, 1983). One study planned for the future will investigate this issue. The importance of this issue has been confirmed by several discussions this past year with rural educators and parents at the Canadian Rural Education Congress in Saskatoon, Saskachewan (Feburary, 1997) and the National Rural Education Convention in Tucson, Arizona (September, 1997).

The Search for a Sense of Purpose in Rural Education

For some, rural education "means" the delivery of an urban curriculum to students in schools situated in rural communities. Rural education reform or improvement only means making that delivery system more effective or efficient. Generally this agenda is pursued under the guise of "improving educational opportunities for rural youth." However, many rural educators (Nachtical 1992; Sher, 1995; Mulcahy, (1996a) question whether this purpose serves the genuine needs of rural youth and rural communities. These and others reject the notion that the "problem" with rural schools is they are not more like urban schools. This particular point of view calls for a re-evaluation of rural education policies and the creation of a distinct philosophy of rural education, one that has the sustaining and development of rural communities as its prime concern.

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Development of a Rural Education Data Base

One very important role for such a centre will be to develop a database of information about rural schools in this province. This data base would facilitate the work of faculty member and graduate students who wished to develop a research projects related to rural education studies. Another function of the centre will be the compilation of both local, national and international resources specifically related to rural and small schools education. Such sources would include both published materials and electronic links and resources. Establishing connections with rural education scholars and other rural research and development centres world-wide would also be part of the centre's agenda.

Community Based Education and Schooling

Unifying all of these research and development interests is my strong conviction that improvement efforts aimed at rural education and schooling must be grounded in an ecological perspective. There has to be a recognition of the interdependent, mutually beneficial and reciprocal relationship that exists between a rural community and its school. Changes made in the name of reform must serve the children and the wider community. Rural Educators must be interested in community development as well as educational development. One cannot proceed without the other. In some instances, particularly in areas with significant socio-economic deficits, community development may have to come first.

Furthermore, the starting point for all my work is a belief that community based education and schooling offers rural children and youth their best chance and opportunity for academic success and full participation in the life of the school and their communities. Therefore, all of my work is directed towards sustaining and enhancing the quality of education available to all children in their community schools. My interests in curriculum development, pedagogy, distance education and telelearning will be pursued with this objective in the forefront. With a balanced utiliization of human and technical resources, small community schools can be among the very best in the nation.

Macro and Micro Environments - The Search for a Pedagogy of Telelearning in Rural Schools

(by Ken Stevens and Dennis Mulcahy)

The search for appropriate pedagogies for classrooms in geographically isolated communities is an international one, as seen in the Clarenville - Piopio relationship. As information and communication technologies develop and converge, new opportunities for teachers and learners are provided. However, as more technologies become available for educators to consider for classroom use, appropriate ways of organizing teaching and learning have to be developed to make effective use of them. One way of achieving this is for schools to work collaboratively, even if this means crossing multiple time zones.

Rural schools have always been places in which a considerable measure of flexibility has been required. To be effective in a small school in a rural area teachers have often had to teach beyond their area of expertise. In many small rural schools teachers have, furthermore, sought ways to provide students with access to learning opportunities beyond their local community. Students in rural areas have often had to find innovative ways of accessing non-local educational and vocational opportunities because of the lack of local employment.

As educational systems in developed countries enter the information age, many rural schools are at the forefront of developments in the application of information and communication technologies and the creation of flexible learning environments. One prominent outcome has been the linking of small schools electronically at regional, national and even international levels. Although electronically networked teaching and learning may not suit all students, this development provides a rural community with choices in the ways in which it can access educational resources from other places.

Students are often required to assume increased independence in their learning when electronic networks are used between schools but experience in New Zealand has shown that they usually have to be assisted by teachers in the setting of goals, the meeting of deadlines and in evaluating their progress.(Stevens, 1995a; 1995b). Teachers are effective in networked classes if they can be flexible in ways their students are encouraged to participate in on-line lessons. Strategies and protocols for on-line teaching have to be developed between participating schools if all students are to be able to fully participate in shared learning experiences.

The introduction of a rural school to an electronic network considerably improves its resource base for both teachers and learners. There is considerable scope in the development of rural school networking for the provision of individualized learning programs for students and this is something that will be considered by the Telelearning and Rural Education Centre. However, teachers have pointed out that " it is what goes on in the head of the teacher that matters" and the teacher is still the resource base of a successful lesson taught over an inter-school rural network (Stevens, 1995b). It is often difficult to coordinate the timetables of participating schools. A considerable measure of inter-institutional and intra-institutional cooperation is therefore required in the form of detailed planning for successful networking to develop.

There have been found to be a number of issues that have to be considered in the electronic linking of small rural schools at regional, national and international levels.
Considerable expense is incurred in maintaining each school's hardware, particularly the repair of faults and on-line costs. Constant changes in hardware and software by manufacturers makes it necessary to continually upgrade hardware and software and to recognize this as an on-going cost.

The need for rural networked schools to have a close relationship with the suppliers of technology is now obvious. In particular, there is a need for expert advice and support from technology suppliers and this should be at the network rather than at the individual school level.

A vital aspect of the development of networks is the coordination of technology and software between schools. Without compatibility of technology, schools cannot fully participate in networks, with consequent loss of educational opportunities for rural students and their communities. The purchase of appropriate hardware and software is an area of confusion for principals and many teachers in most of the schools with which the Centre has developed a relationship.

The successful administration of a rural school electronic network requires local technical support. Many rural teachers fear a situation in which the technology they are using malfunctions during a lesson in the absence of local technical support. Unless adequate support systems are established, networking between rural schools could be curtailed by reluctant teachers.

The introduction of inter-school electronic networks has added a new dimension to New Zealand and Canadian education. As new technologies increasingly influence the organization of education in rural schools, it is appropriate that the requirements of particular groups: girls, indigenous students and those with special learning needs be assessed in relation to its introduction.

It is possible however, that the introduction of information technology in schools may actually increase educational isolation for some rural students and their families if its application reduces teacher contact. Furthermore, the application of increasingly sophisticated information and communication technologies in schools in small rural communities may contribute to the isolation of students from their parents who are not introduced to either its use or made aware of its educational and vocational potential. New technologies in rural schools are unlikely to be fully utilized unless attention is given to the professional development of teachers in their selection and application in relation to teaching and learning.

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Success of High-Risk Students after Completion of an Elementary School Intervention Program: A Longitudinal Study

Presenters: Marilyn Smith, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension; George C. Hill, University of Nevada, Reno & Marcia Bandera, Elko County School District

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Success of High-Risk Students after Completion of an Elementary School Intervention Program: A Longitudinal Study

Introduction

The longitudinal cohort study (Borg & Gall, 1983)described in this report is part of a larger collaborative study of all 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students in the Elko County School District (ECSD) in rural Nevada. The larger study was a needs assessment survey of that population. For this longitudinal study, the investigators were particularly interested in a particular sub-set of that population. Those were students who had completed an intervention program in the 5th grade and were identified. The 8th and 10th grade students simply responded "yes" or "no" to the question "Were you enrolled in JDI program in elementary school?"

The fifth-grade intervention was a collaborative after-school program between University of Nevada Cooperative Extension and the Elko County School District. Known locally as "Just Do It, Jr." (JDI), the program focused on a life-skills education curriculum and involved the high-risk youth as peer teachers for younger age students. Youth-at-risk of academic failure were referred to this after-school program by elementary teachers. The program was designed using criteria outlined by Joy Dryfoos (1990) and emphasized an ecological model (Brofenbrenner, 1979). The program addressed personal, school, family, and community issues and built on individual and family strengths. Building self-esteem was an important program component

The major questions this study sought to answer were: 1) How are the former 5th grade JDI students doing compared to the other students in the district?; 2) Do the needs of these high-risk students continue to be different from other students in the district?; and 3) What are the major differences?

Methodology

The survey was accomplished using an investigator designed questionnaire. The content and design was based on input from teen age focus groups and was reviewed by a panel of experts. Except for demographic data, all questions were designed with a Likert scale or categorical response format.

All 8th, 10th, and 12th graders in the ECSD were surveyed. Slightly over 72 percent of the total N and over 75 percent of the former JDI students produced usable responses. Students responses not included in the results were either absent on the day the survey was administered and therefore did not complete a questionnaire or those who provided unusable data. Table 1 indicates the number of former JDI students completing the survey and the year these respondents were in the 5th grade program. Since the program began in 1991, no 12th grade students were former JDI students.

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Table 1

Response Rate on the CohortLongitudinal Study from Former "Just Do It, Jr." Students

Grade	Number Indicating They Were JDI Members	Actual Number of JDI Members During 5th Grade
8th	57	77 (1993-94 class)
10th	35	45 (1991-92 class)
TOTAL	107	122

The data were scanned onto disk and analyzed via SPSS. Descriptive statistics were produced for each variable. A post-hoc rank order correlation of the top ten concerns of each group was performed to determine if the rankings were statistically similar. In addition, the Krusal-Wallis test (KW) was utilized to determine if differences existed between the responses of those students who had participated in the JDI and the general population. Krusal-Wallis results are reported as a chi-square. A non-parametric test was used since assumptions required for parametric test could not be met (Siegel, 1956). The questionnaire contained 177 total items. A list of the concerns which this report focuses on are found in Table 3.

Results

The first question asked by the investigators was how are the former 5th grade JDI students doing compared to other students in the district? Chi square analysis indicates that the JDI group was very similar in conventional measures of school success when compared to the population. There were no differences between the two groups in overall grades, number of times repeating a grade, and cutting classes. Differences were found between the two groups in how well they liked school, importance of school to parents, and length of time they plan to go to school. The JDI group was split over fondness of school between really disliking and really liking it. Former JDI students were more likely to report that their parents placed high value on education and higher overall satisfaction rating for school.

The second question that investigators asked was do the needs of the JDI students continue to be different from other students in the district? Table 2 displays the ten highest ranking concerns for each group. As is evident, the two groups had very similar concerns and were quite congruent with the top ten of the JDI group being the top ten for the population albeit with a different ordering. The post-hoc correlation of the rankings (Spearman's rho) of the two groups yielded an $r = .66$ which is statistically significant at the .05 level.

Table 2

Student Ranking of Concerns - top ten for JDI compared to the population

Rank &Percent Concerned & Very Concerned	JDI (%)	Other Students (%)
Parents understanding & supporting me	1 (74.8%)	3 (67.2%)
Preventing AIDS	2 (71.4%)	2 (71.6%)
Doing well in school	3 (70.8%)	1 (72.8%)
Getting along with parents/step-parents	4 (66.4%)	7 (58.4%)
Deciding what to do after high school	5 (63.8%)	4 (65.3%)
Pregnancy prevention	6 (62.3%)	10 (51.7%)
The quality of education I am getting	7 (62.2%)	8 (58.2%)
Making decisions	8 (61.3%)	6 (61.6%)
Paying for education after high school	9 (59.8%)	5 (62.4%)
Family using drugs/alcohol	10 (57.9%)	9 (57.4%)

$r = .66$ $p < .05$

While the top ten concerns were statistically similar as shown in Table 2 the entire list of concerns is shown in Table 3. A KW analysis was performed to answer the investigators third question "what are the major differences." Two comparisons were made of the groups. The first column is a comparison of the degree of concerns. There were only three concerns in which statistically significant differences were found. Those concerns were personal safety in the community, abuse (physical, sexual, and emotional), and pregnancy prevention.

The second column in Table 3 displays results of where student would like to receive more information in helping them deal with the concerns. The options were from parents, friends, school, non-school programs, and other adults. Those items where statistically significant differences occurred are preventing aids, deciding what to do after high school, paying for education after school, and the quality of education that I am getting. Generally, the JDI group was more likely to want to get information about theses topics from their parents.

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Table 3

Student Ratings of Concerns

Concerns	χ^2 degree of concerns	χ^2 sources of information
Preventing AIDS	8.47	12.55*
Making decisions	5.30	3.48
Getting along with parents/step-	3.99	7.16
Parents understanding & supporting me	2.78	5.73
Deciding what to do after high school	7.07	10.35*
Using drugs & alcohol	6.36	5.00
Eating the right foods	4.14	7.73
Living up to parents' expectations	1.58	5.70
Friends using drugs/alcohol	2.48	1.81
Family using drugs/alcohol	3.97	5.87
Peer pressure to use drugs/alcohol	7.89	4.85
Paying for education after high school	5.37	10.83*
Getting along with classmates	6.34	6.56
Dating concerns	8.51	5.47
Peer pressure for sexual activity	1.55	4.10
Family having trouble paying bills	6.26	3.65
Personal safety at school	7.97	6.63
Personal safety in community	21.13**	6.10
Harassment from peers	6.24	2.75
Abuse (physical, sexual or emotional)	12.77*	4.35
Pregnancy prevention	14.96*	7.66
Gangs in your community	1.40	2.08
Having satisfying/enjoyable work	9.26	9.11
The quality of education I am	7.20	14.51*
Doing well in school	5.33	8.71
Getting along with teachers	5.48	2.14
Understanding other cultures	9.12	0.68

*$p < .05$ **$p < .01$

Summary and Conclusions

The major objectives the study sought to answer were: 1), how are the former 5th grade JDI students doing compared to the other students in the district?; 2) do the needs of these high-risk students continue to be different from other students in the district?; and 3) what are the major differences? Since this program had been a collaborative effort between Cooperative Extension and the local school district both organizations were very interested to determine if these students were back in the "mainstream." The data presented here confirms that the students, while different on some respects, tend to be fairly typical on school issues when compared to the general population. Two concerns that both groups ranked in the top ten which was more than three rankings difference was (1) Pregnancy prevention and (2) paying for education after high school. The kind of education the JDI group indicated they would seek after high school was also different with more JDI indicating they planned to go to trade school.

One of the questions that each agency had in the beginning of the program for high risk youth is how will we ever know beyond the sort term whether this program has a lasting impact on participants. As stated earlier this was a population study that allowed the investigators the opportunity to investigate the concerns of those participants and compare the concerns against those of the population. Students at high-risk of academic failure do not typically have a high concern for doing well in school yet the JDI group rated this as their third highest concern. The rest of the surveyed population ranked this as their #1 concern.

Differences between the JDI and the rest of the surveyed population seem to be primarily personal, family and community issues. Pregnancy prevention was a higher concern for the JDI group with over 50% of the JDI very concerned. Abuse and personal safety in the community were also of higher concern for the JDI group. While not reported in the results data, the JDI group also indicated they were more likely to be in a gang. Community and family issues may contribute to this increased percentage of JDI in gangs than the general school population. The survey did not ask students their level of gang involvement. As a result of the reported gangs involvement of JDI students, additional programming for teachers, students and parents involved in the 5th grade program will be added to the JDI curriculum.

The investigators are pleased to report the school success of the JDI group. The personal, family and community problems these high-risk students continue to encounter are not surprising. Much of the life skills curriculum taught in the 5th grade was focused on helping these high-risk students cope with their situation in school.

The data indicates that school success, a major goal of the 5th grade program, is evident with the JDI group. There is an overall feeling of optimism about the future as the JDI students set goals toward trade school and future jobs. Overcoming the pregnancy prevention, abuse, and personal safety in their community issues will be determining factors for successful progression into a productive adulthood. This data provided important information for those persons conducting intervention programs targeted at academically high-risk youth.

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Abstract

Improvements in high-risk fifth-grade students school, home and personal achievements showed statistically significant improvements immediately following completion of a collaborative after-school program. University of Nevada Cooperative Extension and local school district officials completed a follow-up study to see if the program had any lasting impacts on the participants that are now in the 8th and 10th grades. Data indicate school success, a major goal of the program is evident for the JDI group. Personal, family, and community issues remain concerns. The students who are now in the 8th and 10th grade report an overall feeling of optimism about the future as they set goals toward trade school and future jobs. The data indicate that the targeted intervention program at the elementary school level has produced some desired long-term benefits.

Rural Education Reform: The Consultation Process

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Rural Education Reform: The Consultation Process

By Dennis M. Mulcahy

Introduction

On September 10, 1996 the government of Newfoundland and Labrador announced that the promised[i] public consultation on educational reform would begin on September 16. Just prior to the first scheduled meeting, which was to be held in Port Aux Basques, the government circulated a document entitled *Structuring the Education System: A Public Consultation Paper for Educational Change in Newfoundland and Labrador*.[ii] On the first page of this document, the Minister of Education, the Hon. Roger Grimes, stated the purpose of the consultation process:

> The education of our children is something we value greatly. That's why the Government is asking for your advice before making decisions that affect you, your children and your school community. The purpose of this consultation process is to determine how we can best work together to organize our schools and our student transportation system for the future.

Following this statement the *Consultation Paper* then proceeded to outline the "structural" changes the government felt were needed to improve the education system. Of primary concern for rural citizens was the government's long standing view that small community schools should be closed and the children bussed to larger consolidated schools. In effect the government viewed the consultation process as an opportunity for the people of the province to express their views as to which schools on what basis would be closed. There seemed to be the assumption, on government's part, that everyone accepted the logic and necessity of closing a certain number of small schools as part of educational reform. As I shall attempt to illustrate in this paper this was not exactly how rural communities viewed this consultative opportunity. The government also used this document to present selected data regarding declining enrolments and what it referred to as the "economic realities of the nineties." Parents were invited to review this information as it "sets an appropriate context," in the government's view, "for this [consultation] process and provides the key indicators that we need to discuss structural matters."[iii]

In the first part of this paper, entitled *The Official View*, I will review, briefly, the government's position regarding its proposed "structural reforms" as stated in the *Consultation Paper*. I will describe the changes the government believes must be made so that the students in the province will be ready to compete on the "world stage" with the best students from other provinces and countries." [iv] I will examine the rationale used to justify and support these changes. In the second part of the paper, *The Grass Roots Perspective*, I will provide an overview of what occurred during the series of 19 public meetings that were held in various parts of the province. Approximately 5,000 people attended these meetings and 250 presentations were made to the minister. In addition many informal questions were asked and comments made during the sessions, some of which lasted as

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long as 5 hours.[v] I will attempt to summarize some of the views expressed and the questions raised by rural parents and educators participating in these public meetings.

The Official View

School Closure and Consolidation

From the very beginning of the current round of educational reform[vi] one of the primary objectives of the provincial government has been the closure and consolidation of small community schools. Such action has been advocated, as a structural change needed to make the system of education more effective and more efficient. *Our Children Our Future*[vii] introduced the term "school viability" into reform discussions and recommended that "non-viable" small schools be "targeted" for closure.[viii] To a large extent the *Consultation Paper* being discussed here simply reiterated the government's fundamental position since 1992. In the name of educational reform, non-viable schools should be closed and consolidated. This restructuring will improve the educational opportunities for the children of the province, and allow the government to make the best use of dwindling economic resources. The only outstanding issue as far as the government was concerned was settling on the criteria for determining viability.

A previous attempt by the government to define viability criteria had failed badly. The "School Viability Regulations" publicized in December of 1995[ix] had defined viability simply in terms of class size. For example, at the k-6 level, a minimum enrolment of 20 students was required for a school to be considered viable. This meant that a k-6 school with less than 140 students was considered non-viable and could be, in the Royal Commission's words "targeted for closure." These regulations placed in immediate jeopardy as many as 180 rural community schools. The public out cry and protest over this simplistic, quantitative approach to determining viability forced the government to withdraw these regulations.[x]

The tact taken by the government in the *Consultation Paper*, in terms of defining school viability, was at once more vague and general yet in some ways a more powerful argument, and one definitely more difficult to criticize directly. This time around the government did not fall into the trap of putting a specific enrolment figure as a minimum size for a viable school.

The government's position, simply stated, was that in order to be considered viable a school has to be capable of providing a quality program:

> Regardless of where they live or where their children attend school, parents in the Province should be confident that the school is able to offer a quality program.[xi]

This position of course begs several questions: what constitutes a quality program? From what or more importantly whose perspective will quality be defined or determined? The government's position paper leaves these questions unanswered. There is no indication what it has in mind in regards to a "quality program." There is a suggestion, however, that a quality program means more than being able to provide core or minimum requirements. Furthermore, the government asserted, it is difficult for small schools to provide the kind of quality programming that is needed or desirable:

> In many cases, small schools can offer only the core program, while other larger schools are able to offer a broader, more varied program of studies to the students.

No indication is given by the document as to what size of school is to be considered as a "small school." Declining enrolments over the last few years, however, have created a situation where:

> ...schools that were once viable are left with so few students that it is unreasonable to operate them. This means that the human and physical resources necessary to offer our students the best possible education are being spread out over more schools than can be sustained. For example, additional building maintenance costs take away from money that could be channeled to educate students in the classroom. We have to do something about this. The issue is a financial one yes, but more importantly it is an issue of educational quality.[xii]

From the government's point of view the "something" that must be done is very clear. Given the "economic realities of the nineties" and the fact that we have to prepare our children to "take their place on the world stage:"

> Government believes it is inappropriate to provide additional resources [to maintain a small school in a community] when *a better learning opportunity* for students is available nearby (emphasis added).[xiii]

In communities or areas[xiv] with more than one school, "we have to examine busing options to bring students in small schools to larger ones which will offer them *greater opportunities* (emphasis added)." In the final analysis, parents will have to make a choice. Insist on maintaining their small community school with its limited program options or agree to close their community school and bus their children to "*a larger school that is able to offer a wider range of program options which would provide better opportunities for students* (emphasis added)."[xv]

The government is sure that parents will make this decision in a "responsible manner" and do what is right for their children. Given the way the government presented the argument what choice did they have? To insist on keeping their community schools is made out to be both immoral and selfish.

Isolated Schools

The *Consultation Paper* acknowledged that no matter how many small schools communities agree to close there will continue to exist certain isolated schools that will have to be maintained because it would not be possible or feasible to close them. Such schools may be located on offshore coastal islands or be too distant for bussing to another community. These schools - and only these schools - will be provided with additional resources so that they can provide at least a "core program."[xvi]

A significant change is being proposed here. Previous government policy provided for additional resources, human and material, to be allocated to all small schools. The new policy being proposed would see only those schools that could claim isolation status qualifying for supplemental provision. Location and degree of isolation will now determine allocation, not size. New policy guidelines will see all schools regardless of their size receiving the same allocation based on a per pupil basis. To gain any extra provision a school will have to prove its status as a necessarily existent school.

The policy increases the pressure on a community to agree to close its small school if it cannot prove its isolation status. If, in the government's or school board's view the bus ride to another community and a larger school is a "reasonable distance" the school will be targeted for closure. If the parents do not agree to close the school, then the government will not provide that school with any extra funding regardless of how small it is.

Student Transportation

In order to "rationalize the system" the *Consultation Paper* proposed a number of changes to the student transportation system. School closures and consolidations will necessitate two changes: 1. Students who currently attend a community school will have to be bussed to a another community; 2 an increase in time and distance for some students who are already being bussed. Parents, the *Consultation Paper* should accept having their children spending a "reasonable time" on the buss since this will enable them to avail of increased educational opportunities. A "reasonable time" is not defined but the alternatives are made clear to parents: accept the need for an increase in bussing or condemn your children to an inferior form of education.

In addition to wanting to increase and extend bussing as an necessary consequence of closing and consolidating schools, the government also proposed a number of other changes in the name of economy:

- Enforcing strictly the current regulation of the bus only making four stops within the 1.6 km.
- Adopting a system of staggered opening and closing of schools, where practical, in areas where several schools exist. That is, schedule the times schools open and close to permit the same bus to make double runs. This may require some schools to open earlier or close later. For example, one school might open at 8:45 and another at 9:15. This would reduce the number of buses required to transport students.

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- Bussing would be provided only to the closest school. (At the time of the consultation process, bussing was provided to the closest denominational school of the parent's choosing).

In addition to these proposed changes the *Consultation Paper* asked people to consider the following:

- whether it is reasonable to increase the distance for school bus eligibility beyond 1.6 kilometres;
- whether the distance for school bus eligibility should be increased for high school students in favour of keeping the distance at 1.6 kilometres for primary and elementary students;
- whether it is reasonable for the taxpayers of the Province to continue to pay the full cost of school busing or whether users of the system should pay some portion of the total cost;
- what should be considered a reasonable busing time (with declining enrolments and the larger geographical areas to be covered, busing times may increase and some students may have to be on a school bus for over 60 minutes); and
- whether parents would choose a longer period of time on the school bus for students to attend a larger, well resourced school or a shorter bus ride for students to attend a smaller school with fewer teachers and resources.

School Designation[xvii]

Newfoundland and Labrador has a rather unique educational system in North America. The system is a publicly funded totally denominational school system. There are no public non-denominational schools in the province. All schools in the province are officially designated as either Roman Catholic, Seventh Day Adventist, Pentecostal, or Integrated (a combination of Salvation Army, United Church, Anglican, and Presbyterian). Although it rarely happens, students can be denied access to a school because they do not adhere to the particular designated Christian denomination of that school. Students are in fact entitled to bussing to the nearest denominational school of their part faith.

As part of its restructuring plans, the government proposed that all schools in the province would be re-designated, in the first instance, as inter-denominational. All children, regardless of their denominational affiliation would be entitled and in fact forced to attend the school closest to where they live. This proposal would in fact eliminate the need for bussing for some children. It would also end the duplication of schooling in a number of communities. Historically, each denomination had a right to establish a school if a sufficient number of adherents lived in a particular community.

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However, there would also be a provision for the creation of uni-denominational schools. A uni-denominational school would be a school that had a specific denominational designation. (Such schools would in fact be the same as they were before the proposed changes). The issue for discussion was how to decide which schools would be designated uni-denominational. What criteria and mechanism would be used to make this decision?

The public consultation process was the opportunity for people to give their views as to how uni-denominational schools would be created (or more accurately, re-created). The government offered their view as follows:

> Parents of children who will attend school in the 1997/98 school year and who wish to have their children attend uni-denominational schools will be given the opportunity to advise the School Board of that preference. If the parents of a sufficient number of students indicate that they wish their children to attend a uni-denominational school, the School Board will be required to establish such a school, provided the following conditions are met:
>
> - the uni-denominational school meets the criteria for a viable school, and
> - the creation of the uni-denominational school does not cause another school to become non-viable.

To summarize briefly the "official view:" The government came to the consultation process with a simple agenda. Education reform dictates the closure and consolidation of small community schools. Small schools are educationally deficient and a drain on the general resources of the province and the education budget in particular. Students will have to bussed to larger schools in other communities where they will be able to avail of "better educational opportunities." Parents should accept these changes because they are in the best interests of their children.

The Grass Roots View[xviii]

It was clear from the very first public meeting held in Port Aux Basques that rural communities across the province were not going to buy into the government's reform agenda. The public consultation process was going to be their opportunity to continue the fight to save their community schools. Although the government had attempted with its consultation paper to set the agenda and define the parameters for discussion, rural citizens came to this first and all subsequent meetings with their own agendas. They asked questions and raised issues that were important and significant to them, their children and their communities.

As far as rural citizens were concerned this was simply one more battle in the ongoing struggle to save their schools and possibly their very communities and way of life. The successful protest effort earlier in the year (January and February 1996) had been a valuable rehearsal for this public consultation process. Consequently, they were more

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prepared and ready to express their views that they might otherwise have been given the shortness of the notice given for the meetings. [xix]

Participants were generally critical of the government's reform agenda and their actions thus far. There was a strongly felt and articulated view that closing small schools, increasing student bussing, and rescinding long-standing polices that provided special allocation for small schools could not in any way be characterized as improvements. Many were convinced that what the government was primarily interested in was saving money and cutting costs. Improving the quality of education was decidedly secondary. Many people at the public meetings reminded the Minister that the government had already reneged on a commitment to keep any money saved through restructuring in education.

Fighting to save their small schools was nothing new to the people of rural Newfoundland and Labrador. The history of rural education tells many stories of emotionally charged meetings where people expressed their feelings about losing their school. However, one very noticeable difference this time around was that feeling and emotion was supplemented with research data, critical questions and well-argued and articulated positions. The rural schools the government was attempting to close had produced a generation of parents very different from the previous one. There may have been less shouting and tears but there was a lot more facts, figures and informed opinion.[xx] They felt strongly about the issues as they have always had, but this time around their feelings were informed by research.

School Closure and Consolidation

Community Schools

Preserving their community schools was the most important and central issue for rural participants in the public consultation process. The government entered the process with the assumption that the way to improve rural education and cut costs was to close and consolidate small schools. Rural parents and educators came to the process to convince the government that small schools were not only viable but also valuable and that the foundation of reform should be the preservation and enhancement of community based education and schooling.

When it came to school closure and consolidation issues the official approach had always been to focus exclusively and narrowly on school viability. The decision to close or keep open a school was always made with reference only to the school. No other issues were judged to be either legitimate or relevant. The *Consultation Paper* followed the same line of argument. Rural communities, however, have always insisted that a more comprehensive, a more ecological perspective is required. Closing a school has far-reaching social and economic implications, not just educational ones.

The people of rural Newfoundland and Labrador did not come to the consultation meetings to do as the Minister asked them: agree with him to close their small

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community schools so that their children could have a "better educational opportunity" a "reasonable distance" down the road in another community. They came to convince him that he was wrong. They attempted to do this by arguing the importance of the school to the community and the community to the school. The relationship is reciprocal, interdependent and mutually beneficial. Therefore decisions about closing a school cannot be made with reference only to the school or schooling issues. The impact of the closure on the community must be considered and the costs to be paid by the children and their parents who would have to travel by bus out of their home community.

Many rural citizens tried once again to convince the Minister of Education how important a school was to a rural community.[xxi] As one presenter explained:

> Taking a school out of a small community is like taking the heart right out of it. If you have no school, you have no children, no town. Government must realize that in rural Newfoundland, the school is a central institution, and as such, should be developed to impact our communities in a positive way towards the future of Newfoundland. The operation of a school provides a focal point for the community, a source of pride

The anguish that is felt and the outrage that is expressed by rural citizens at the possible loss of their community schools has little to do with nostalgia or sentimentality, as some would prefer to believe. Presenters made clear that their concerns were grounded in a number of very significant social and economic realities. In a rural community a school is not just a place of instruction, meaningful only to the students and their parents. In small rural communities schools continue to function as social and cultural centres for the whole community. School concerts at Christmas time and on other occasions, are eagerly anticipated and attended. This may seem like a small matter in the larger scheme of things, but in a small community it matters a great deal to everyone. [xxii]

Communities, the Minister was told, take pride in their schools; many were built by volunteer labour. In rural Newfoundland and Labrador the whole community supports and assists the school in myriad ways. The school helps define the community and give it an identity. It is a connection to the past and represents a hope for the future. Most importantly a school is a sign of the community's viability as a place to live, a place to stay, and a place to move to. The presence of children and the sounds of their play throughout the day are signs of life and vitality sorely needed by our rural communities. When community leaders claim that the loss of the school will lead to the death of the community they know what they are talking about. If they have a choice, families with school age children will not move to a community that doesn't have a school.

For rural presenters the issue was simple: We can choose to sustain and develop rural education and rural communities by building on the intrinsic strengths and advantages of small scale, community based schooling or we can choose not to. The choice we make reflects our commitment to rural Newfoundland and Labrador. Many community leaders expressed the view that the current attack on small community schools is just another aspect of the general erosion of services reflecting the government's attempt to force another round of resettlement.[xxiii]

Presenters claimed that rural communities make many valuable contributions to their schools. Because the school is a source of pride to the community, and there is a vested interest in its success and upkeep. There is a sense of ownership and responsibility on the part of the whole community, not just those with children in school. Consequently, many communities support their schools in concrete ways in terms of upkeep and repairs and material resources.

In addition, the people of the community are often used as resource persons for special projects and school activities. This moral and financial support from the community is a significant factor in the success of rural schooling. If the school is removed from the community, the school will lose this support to a significant degree. This will be to the school and the students' detriment. Parents do not and will not support a school located in another community to the same degree or in the same way even though their children attend that school.

Having the school in the community greatly facilitates contact and interaction between parents and teachers, in both formal and informal ways. Contact is easier, and often occurs in the daily routine of community life. When the school is not in the community and parents have to travel some distance this contact is diminished. Given the demonstrated importance of this kind of interaction to student achievement, closing a community school is not a good idea.

A principal speaking on behalf of her small community school spoke to this issue:

> St. George's Primary School is a proud school, which enjoys the support of the community. We may not have all the resources, programs or teachers, as larger centres have, but we do have teacher-pupil contact because we are small and we are a community school. Education is built on a community of human beings. It seems like a simple concept but I think we've forgotten it along the way.

Several parents pointed to the apparent contradiction in government's polices. On the one hand they were advocating a more active role for parents in the school through the creation of schools councils. On the other hand, they seemed determined to make parental participation, at least in rural areas, more difficult.

Pre-school literacy and orientation programs were used as examples by a number of presenters to make the case for community based education. These early intervention programs have been developed to combat the traditional problems with literacy. The most successful programs, in terms of attendance, it was claimed were those that operated in a single community. It was further claimed that those schools serving a number of communities found that the further away a family lived from the school the less likely they were to participate in the program. One reason for this was that not all parents in rural areas have access to two cars. So, if one parent is working away from the community the other cannot attend. Rural parents do not have bussing and taxi options as do urban parents. [xxiv]

*Small Schools Are Viable **And** Valuable*

The "official view" of small schools was primarily a re-play of the traditional "conventional wisdom"(Sher, 19977) regarding solving the "rural school problem" Nachtigal (1982): small schools are neither academically nor economically viable. They weren't academically viable because they could not deliver quality programs; they were not economically viable because the per pupil operating costs were much higher than in larger schools. In the interest of improving educational opportunities, not to mention cutting costs, rural education reform dictated but one course of action: closure and consolidation.

The grass roots perspective on the viability of small schools was fundamentally different from this official view. First of all they questioned the notion that small schools cannot be viable. Their position was that not only can they be viable but they are in fact quite valuable, especially so for particular student populations. Many people seized on the government's suggestion that small schools cannot provide a quality education program. They noted that "quality" is a very relative term and can mean different things to different people. Individual communities pointed with pride to the achievements of their small community schools to demonstrate that small schools can be quality schools. Examples were offered of small schools in the province whose academic achievement record, degree of retention and post secondary participation demonstrated their worth. They equaled or surpassed provincial standards. These were offered as proof that small schools are capable of quality education.

The government's claim that small schools were not economically viable was also questioned and criticised. People were very critical of the government's notion that closing small schools would save significant amounts of money. They pointed to the increased costs of bussing and the costs of repairs and renovations for the receiving schools. There were suggestions that the economic viability of a school be determined on an individual basis and be carried out by an independent assessor. [xxv] There was also strong criticism of the government's emphasis on economic viability. As one presenter protested,

> Schools are not corporations, they are built on people, values, and morals. When looking at schools in terms of closures or reductions, don't look at them in terms of dollars and cents, because I'm still waiting to see a document that says school closures will save money,

The case was also made for the intrinsic value of small-scale schooling[xxvi]. Small schools were not just viable but were in fact very valuable in terms of their capability in providing a certain kind of education. The smaller number of students in the school and the generally smaller pupil teacher ratio was a very positive thing. Small schools have or represent a particular set of educational values that should be cherished and built upon. Small schools, because of their size, create a unique, nurturing, and supportive learning environment that enhances children's learning. Small schools provide an opportunity for child and student centred education and schooling. Small classes and smaller overall student population allows teachers to get to know the students and their parents in a way that does not happen in larger schools. It is rather ironic, noted several presenters, that at a time when in other parts of North America, people are starting to realize that small schools, not big schools are to be preferred, we seem determined in this province to close as many of our small schools as we can.

The emergent research which indicates that for socio-economically "at risk" students smaller schools offered them their best chance of academic success was also cited as a reason for keeping small schools. Small schools are particularly valuable in rural areas where a significant number of "at risk" students. A number of presenters made reference to the emergent body of research that indicates that small schools represent the best chance that "at risk" students have. [xxvii]

In addition to rejecting the notion that small schools are not viable and asserting the notion that small schools are in fact to be valued and preserved for their own sake, rural participants maintained that the question of school viability cannot be addressed without reference to community schooling. If we are committed to sustaining and developing rural Newfoundland and if we subscribe to community based schooling, then we have to accept the fact that this will mean the necessary existence of small schools. But the necessity of their existence isn't because they are so remote and isolated they cannot be closed. They are necessary because in rural areas of the province small scale schooling makes the most sense. Larger schools might make economic sense in urban areas with high levels of population concentration; but in rural areas with a dispersed and distant population, particularly in areas with large numbers of "at risk" students small schools are required.

From this perspective questions about the viability of a particular school are asked and answered very differently. If a small community school is determined to be non-viable because it lacks the capability of providing quality education, the response should not be to close it but to provide it with whatever resources it needs to become viable. Reform efforts should set out to **make** small schools viable; not to close them. We make them viable because we value them as necessary for the education of rural children and the future of rural communities. By taking this tack, rural citizens turned the government's argument on its head: the government wanted to target for closure any school classified as non-viable; the people suggested that non-viable schools be targeted for extra funding and provision.

Distance Education

Distance education and other forms of information technology were suggested as ways of making small community schools viable by making up for any real or alleged programming deficiencies. As far as participants were concern, " The distance education

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program currently operating in a number of small schools has been a good example of how we can use technology to help schools offer a broader spectrum of courses. This type of program should be expanded." Other participants pointed out that the information technologies that now exist make the size and location of a school irrelevant to its program capablility. Many people found it curious that there was no mention of distance education in the government's *Consultation Paper*. Some took this absence as an indication of a lack of interest in sustaining community schools.[xxviii]

Student Transportation

As noted above the government's *Consultation Paper* contained two general proposals regarding student transportation: 1. More students will have to be bussed longer distances in the name of improved educational opportunities; 2. Existing bussing services for some students will be reduced in order to cut costs.

The "grass roots" perspective on student transportation was once again very different from government's. The primary concerns of rural parents and educators focused on issues to do with safety and the negative impact of the current degree of bussing on children and their families. Their basic position was that too many students were now being bussed too far, and often on dangerous roads. They rejected the notion that increased bussing was necessarily the only, or the appropriate way to improve educational opportunities for their children. They were critical of the proposed cuts to bussing services describing these as government's way of trying to save money by imposing hardships on rural children and their parents.

The issues and concerns raised by parents related to government's plans to increase bussing included:

- A number of safety concerns were raised, including the lack of adult supervision on school buses and the need for seat belts and two-way radios. Many parents were concerned by the reduction in road maintenance and snow clearing they were noticing. The Department of Education should work closely with the Department of Works, Services and Transportation to ensure that bus routes are cleared of snow in the winter and that these routes are assigned priority for maintenance. Several presenters related examples of bus routes not being cleared in time for buses to reach schools before morning classes begin.

- In several areas of the province, over the last several years, school boards had promised to provide lunchtime bussing in order to get people to agree to close their community schools. This offer was made in the face of parental opposition based in part on the fact that the receiving school did not have proper lunch room facilities. Recent cuts in bussing provision had forced boards to renege on lunchtime bussing. Several parents expressed their concerns about the safety and health of children eating at their desks. Many people felt that lunchrooms should be provided or lunch hour bussing be continued or re-established.

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- There was concern expressed about younger children being so far from home. If they became ill, it might be difficult for parents to go and get them. Parents of children with special needs were especially concerned about the possibility of their children been bussed to distant communities. Several parents expressed the concern that mixed busloads of older and younger students had a negative impact on younger children. Older students often exposed younger children to ideas and language that their parents did not feel they were ready for.

- Bussed children do not have the option to linger after school to chat with a teacher or play with a friend. They do not have the opportunity to seek help from their teacher with something they are having difficulty with in one of their classes. Bussing negatively affects the quality of a child's life and the nature of his/her participation in the school. Because they are bussed, they may not be able to take part in the extra-curricular life of their new school. Sports teams, clubs and organizations, drama groups, and school choirs provide valuable educational experiences for our children. It is little wonder they lack a sense of belonging and ownership for the school.

- It was felt that longer bus rides would have a negative affect on student learning and, therefore, guidelines should be developed with the goal of keeping bus rides as short as possible. Many presenters noted that bussed students had reduced access to teachers and the fatigue factor from longer rides often inhibits their learning. [xxix]

Rural citizens were generally critically of all government's proposed changes to the student transportation system. They saw them all for the most part as being primarily concerned with saving money for government at the cost of imposing hardship on students and their parents. With specific reference to proposals put forward by government in their *Consultation Paper*, rural citizens proposed:

- In general we should work towards reducing bussing not increasing it.

- Late busses should be available to all students who are forced to attend consolidated schools outside their home communities, so as to enable them to fully participate in the academic and co-curricular programs of the school.

- Staggered openings, according to some presenters, wreak havoc on the lives of families with more than one school age child. Parents, for example, with children in different levels (i.e., primary, elementary and high school) could have children starting school, leaving school and having lunches at different times

- User fees for busses were rejected by rural participants. The government had closed community schools and created the need for school bussing. Therefore they should pay for it.

- Rural parents pointed out that it is inappropriate to have a single set of guidelines or regulations for the province. Road and weather conditions have to be taken into consideration when considering student bussing. [xxx]

- Parents were very critical of government's earlier proposals for bussing times which would have seen primary children spending 90 minutes a day on the bus and high school students 2 hours.

- Maximum bussing distances/times should vary depending on the age/grade level of the students. While opinions varied, most presenters suggested a 45-60 minute maximum duration for a bus run carrying high school students. Younger elementary children should be bussed for no more than 30 minutes and Kindergarten/primary students should be bussed for a maximum of 15 minutes.

- Several presenters suggested that the length of the overall school day be considered when examining maximum travel times. They suggested that waiting periods due to staggered openings and closings, be factored into the total school day.

- Local school boards should have the power and flexibility to set maximum bussing times so that conditions and circumstances can be taken in to consideration.

Finally, several participants linked their concerns about bussing directly to their argument for maintaining small community schools. The more community schools we have and maintain the less need there is to bus children. Community schools enable children, especially younger children, to be educated close to home and not have to endure long, tiresome and sometimes dangerous bus rides. Spend money on resources for community schools not busses to take children away from the community.

School Designation

For rural residents school designation was generally a secondary issue to the primary one of maintaining their small community school and keeping bussing times and distances as short as possible. Quite a few communities had in previous years demonstrated their willingness to give up their individual small denominational school in favor of a single inter-denominational or "joint services" school which would serve the educational needs of all children in the community. It was clear from the consultation meetings that as long as the community could keep its school and/or keep bussing times and distances at a minimum for their younger children, the majority of rural residents would accept the re-designation of their denominational schools. They would accept an inter-denominational school for the community to which all children could go.

Some Pentacostal and Roman Catholic parents in selected areas[xxxi] of the province, however, were very concerned about the school designation issue. Nevertheless, there was no consensus evident from the consultation meetings as to how to decide on school designation. A wide variety of opinions were expressed on issues such as who in a community or an area should be allowed to have a say, what the process should be like, what percentage of persons expressing a view would be needed to have a school designated as uni-denominational.

Conclusion

The public consultation process in Newfoundland and Labrador clearly revealed a wide chasm between the official and the grass roots views as to how to improve education and schooling in rural communities.

The official view insisted that the progress of rural educational reform dictated the closure and consolidation of small community schools. Such a structural change was needed, the government claimed, in order to improve educational opportunities for rural children. Small schools cannot provide the kinds of quality programming that rural children and students need to "take their place on the world stage" and "successfully compete in the 21st century." Parents should accept the need for more and longer bussing as a small price to pay for a higher quality of education for their children. A restructured system would also be a more efficient system enabling the government to realize substantial savings from closures and reductions to some bussing services. To some extent this position, claimed the government, was a necessary response to the tough "economic realities of the nineties;" however, the primary goal, insisted the *Consultation Paper*, is to improve the quality of education.

The "grass roots" insisted that the foundation of rural educational reform should be a commitment to sustaining and strengthening community-based education. Rural citizens suggested that an ecological perspective needs to inform any proposed changes or intended improvements. The focus cannot be just on the school or the children. The interdependent, mutually beneficial, and reciprocal relationship that exists between a rural communities and their schools must be considered. The closure of a school has social, economic and cultural implications for the community and all its residents. A community school provides a connection to the past, a sense of continuity, and a sign of community vitality and viability.

Community schools facilitate the important relationships and interactions between parents and teachers. Community schools enable children to be educated close to home, thus avoiding long, tiresome, and sometimes dangerous bus rides. Students develop a connection with the school and a sense of ownership; they have a greater opportunity to fully participate in the academic and co-curricular life of the school.

The grass roots view insisted that small schools are not only viable but also valuable as places of quality education. The official view as to what constitutes "quality education" was questioned and criticised; examples of high quality small schools were offered to make the point. Rural citizens rejected the government's notion that significant economic savings may be realized from closing and consolidating small schools. Such savings, such as they are, have to be measured against the impact of such closures on children, families and communities.

From a rural perspective, if some small community schools are found to be lacking in resources, the appropriate response in the name of improvement is to provide them with the needed resources to make them academically viable, not to close them. Distance education and emerging information technologies were viewed as potential ways of maintaining and increasing viability of small community schools.

Finally, the grass roots perspective questioned government's motivation and ultimate agenda. Rural citizens felt that the proposed changes by government had two goals. The first was to cut spending on education regardless of the effects on the quality of education or the quality of students' lives. The second was to reduce the provision of services such as education to rural areas as a way of forcing people to abandon their small rural communities and move to larger "growth centres."

Endnotes

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[i] In January 1996, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador committed to consulting the public on educational reform. This promise was communicated through the Liberal Party's election "Red Book" entitled *Ready for a Better Tomorrow: Platform of the Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador*. This document stated that "The new Liberal government is committed to dialogue and discussion on all elements of implementing education reform before decisions are made," and went on to say that "There will be extensive public consultation before any new school viability rules are adopted."

[ii] In addition to circulating this document through community newspapers and the post, the government made it available on the internet. It may be viewed at: http://www.gov.nf.ca/publicat/educate/educate.htm
For the sake of brevity I shall shorten the title of this document in the rest of my paper to the *Consultation Paper*.

[iii] *Structuring the Education System: A Public Consultation Paper for Educational Change in Newfoundland and Labrador* (1996) [Government Document].

[iv] Ibid.

[v] The original schedule called for 16 meetings but 3 extra ones were added because of demand. The public sessions were generally conducted in a fairly informal manner with plenty of opportunity for questions and comments. The Minister of Education has to be given credit for taking the time to tour the province in this way and being willing to stay and listen until everyone who wished to had had his/her say.

[vi] The current round of educational reform in Newfoundland and Labrador began in 1991 with the establishment of a Royal Commission of Inquiry.

[vii] *Our Children Our Future* (1992) was the official published report of the government's Royal Commission of Inquiry.

[viii] *Our Children Our Future* (1992) Recommendation 8 (p.229)

[ix] In December of 1995, the government released a draft version of a new schools act, *Schools Act, 1996*. Included in this act were these "school viability regulations."

[x] The rural protest against these viability regulations was greatly assisted by the coincidence of a provincial election. School closures became a critical election issue and when the incumbent Liberal government realized that these viability regulations could cost them many rural seats, they quickly rescinded them and promised the consultation process which is the subject of this paper.

[xi] *Structuring the Education System: A Public Consultation Paper for Educational Change in Newfoundland and Labrador* (1996) [Government Document]

[xii] ibid.

[xiii] ibid

[xiv] "...communities or areas" There is a considerable difference, unacknowledged or not understood by the author(s) of this *Consultation Paper*, between closing one of two or more schools in a community and closing one of two or more schools in an area. Most rural communities would accept the former suggestion since it would leave the community still with a school. The later suggestion, however, is much more problematic since at the very least it means leaving at least one community with no school. Also depending on what is to constitute an "area" there are important implications regarding bussing.

[xv] *Structuring the Education System: A Public Consultation Paper for Educational Change in Newfoundland and Labrador* (1996) [Government Document]

[xvi] Does this mean they are not prepared to provide a "quality program" for these isolated schools?

[xvii] The issues surrounding the designation of schools are very complex and making sense of them is beyond the scope of this paper and the interest of its author. I am providing only the briefest overview here because the designation of schools was part of the consultation process. As I indicate elsewhere in my paper, this issue was not of primary importance for the majority of rural residents.

[xviii] In this section I am presenting a synthesis of the views and arguments presented at the 19 public consultation meetings that were held around the province. In developing this section I have drawn on a number of sources: a number of individuals and groups have made available copies of their formal presentations; community newspapers reported on each of the public sessions and these were supplemented in a number of cases with editorials and "letters to the editor;" I have also drawn on the extensive network of rural educators from around the province whom I know and who attended the public sessions; I have also made use of the government's own post process publication on the proceedings; finally, my research assistant and I attended several of the public sessions. I cannot claim that this section reports on everything that was said; for the sake of brevity I have had to be selective. However, I can claim that this section is an accurate representation of the views of rural parents and educators regarding the most important issues.

For the sake of continuity I will use the same headings in this section that I use in the earlier section, *The Official View*

[xix] The first public meeting took place less than a week after the consultation process was announced. People at the first meeting did not in fact see the *Consultation Paper* until the meeting where it was distributed just before the meeting began.

[xx] The activities of a parents group, as reported in a local paper, from the Baie Verte community of Ricketts to save their school illustrates the point. Parents wrote letters to government and put together an information package that pointed out research showing the benefits of keeping small, community schools open. "We don't think it will save any money, "Karen Blake, head of the parent-teacher's association was quoted as saying. " It costs $12,700 annually for the schools heat, light, water and sewer bills," Blake said, "but it will cost $35,500 to add another bus. The school has only four and a half teaching units," she added, "which would likely have to be added to a Baie Verte school if the students moved there." The parents had also done some investigation of multigrading, which traditionally has been used as weapon to convince rural communities to close their small schools. "We couldn't find any convincing evidence that sharing grades is a bad thing," she said. "We know from our personal experience that it can be good." Feb. 18, 1996 E.T.)

[xxi] Perhaps the best expression of this view came from Maurice Tarrant of Lawn, a small rural town on the Burin Penisula. In the school wars of January and February, 1996, he wrote:

> In rural areas our schools are the very heart of our community. What happens if the provincial government rips that heart out? As with any living entity, it will most assuredly die. Those who think that this is simply an education issue should consider what will happen if families decide to start moving out of a community to be closer to a school that their children attend.
>
> Houses will be left vacant. Who will rent when the trend is to move from the community? Property values will drop. Businesses will most definitely feel the negative impact as whole families move away... We are systematically being forced out of our communities to satisfy a government agenda to resettle rural Newfoundland.
>
> Our very way of life and culture is now being threatened like no other period in our history. If we neglect to make our voices heard, our silence will spell certain death for our communities. It's time that our government saw the human face of our people, not just the statistical value.

[xxii] It has always been difficult for some to understand and respect what the loss of its school means to a rural community. Rarely will an educational authority legitimate this issue as being relevant to the discussion about a school closure. This uniquely rural perspective is either ignored, dismissed as irrelevant or mere sentimentality, or treated with contempt by our educational leaders. This lack of understanding is most clearly seen when the community as a whole is not permitted to take part in school closure meetings or to vote on the fate of their school. In many situations only those parents with children in school get to participate. The assumption being that other members of the community have nothing at stake and therefore have no right to express their views in

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the closure discussions. Forgotten is the notion that it takes a whole community to educate a child. Ignored is the fact that everyone in a rural community experiences a sense of loss when a school is closed

[xxiii] In the 1960's the government of the day coerced many small rural communities to "re-settle" in designated growth centres. There is a wide spread view in the province, among rural people, that the government would like to see the same thing happen again, but lacks the temerity to say so overtly. Instead, there has been gradual erosion in the services provided to rural communities such as: highway maintenance, ferry services, postal services, and policing.

[xxiv] Although not appreciated by many urban based educators, many rural families have no car at all.

[xxv] Charisma Collegiate Principal George Chaulk, speaking on behalf of the local school committee pointed out to the minister that the operation of schools should be based on more than a balance sheet. "Efficiency is fine if you're talking about TV's or stereos," he said. "In this case of viability, there should be some sort of external assessment to give a facility a chance to prove its worth." The Nor'Wester (Springdale), Wed., Oct. 2, 1996.

[xxvi] Many presenters criticised the general belief of the government that bigger was necessarily better: Sheldon Kirby of Norris Arm told the Minister: "Bigger is not always better, Mr. Minister, sometimes it's just bigger." (*The Lewisport Pilot* : Sept. 25, 1996).

[xxvii] This was one of the issues I spoke to when I made a presentation to the Minister of Education, at the public meeting held in Mt.Pearle on December 15, 1996.

[xxviii] Current government policy is that funding for distance education will only be provided for small schools that are "necessarily existent": schools on islands, with no road connection to another community; and those existing too far from another school to make bussing feasible.

[xxix] Given the numbers of rural children everywhere in North America who ride the bus to school, many for up to two hours, it is astonishing how little research has been done to investigate the relationship between time and distance and academic achievement.

[xxx] Time and again during this consultation process the wide chasm between the official and the grass roots perspective was demonstrated. The official view seemed always to be grounded in either an ignorance or indifference to the complex reality of the issues. The government wanted simple straightforward answers to what rural folks kept indicating were complex questions. The diversity of rural contexts was seemingly lost on government officials. The government has always wanted to set a single set of regulations for bussing, ignoring totally local conditions. Rural people have always insisted that local conditions have to be considered. A 30 km ride on a straight stretch of paved highway in a built up area is not the same as a 30 km ride on a winding narrow dirt mountain road.

[xxxi] To some degree this issue reflected a number of divisions within the province. For example school designation generated considerable heat and interest in the capital city of St. John's. This reflected a urban/rural split on this issue. With a few notable exceptions rural areas were less interested in the denominational issues. They had "bigger fish to fry." There were also many suggestions that this was an issue more important to church leaders and officials, situated in St. John's than it was to ordinary parents and educators.

'There's Many a Slip Between the Cup and the Lip'

Presenter: Barbara Kent Lawrence
Boston University

'There's Many a Slip Between the Cup and the Lip'

INTRODUCTION

Please note: This material comes from my dissertation: Working Memory, The Influence of Culture on Aspirations. This manuscript is not ready for publication and should not be cited without permission. Thank you.

Three Mountains Consolidated Grammar School nestles against the ebb and flow of Pogie Harbor Marsh, an estuary that embraces the school in a beautiful and serene setting on a large island off the coast of Maine.[1] The school, opened in 1951, is a one-story building with none of the grace of a traditional Cape and few of the amenities of "modern" education. The school now serves over 180 students and must rent "temporary" facilities to accommodate them. The gym, smaller than regulation, was built in 1974 as part of the Community Center and enlarged in 1984 to house the Town Offices. In this room, students practice musical instruments and eat lunch - which, though it may interrupt the town's clerks, does have the advantage of integrating children into the lives of adults when they come to get their dog licenses, fill out requests for septic permits, or pay their taxes.

The school is Spartan - no Science Lab, a small library, a tiny teachers' "lounge," and classrooms that, though they seem spacious and bright, are not large enough for the growing population of children. Some young families can still afford to buy property in Three Mountains, even though the rest of the island is too expensive. Also, Three Mountains is subject to the same demographic pressures as many other parts of the country and has experienced a similar rise in the number of school age children.

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[1] Almost one-half of the Island, which encompasses about 110 square miles, is owned and protected by the national park system. The year-round population is slightly over 12,500 residents, however visitors and summer residents number between 2,500,000 and 3,000,000 annually.

The strength of the school is in its people. The Principal, Cal Parker, has been at the school for over twenty-five years, and his father and mother were also teachers in the town. Five other teachers have each been there for over twenty years, and seven of fifteen full-time teachers grew up in the town or on the island. The average length of service at the school for all the teachers is 10.93 years. These are people who know each other and the families they serve. For example, because some families are reluctant to come to the school, unimposing as it is, Val walks around the docks and "hangs out" waiting for people to come up to talk about weather and the price of lobster until they edge up on the real reasons they, and he, are there: to talk about their children.

Listening to Cal and the other teachers talk about their students is extraordinary - like looking simultaneously through a microscope and a telescope. They see each child in minute detail and they see back through generations to where the child comes from. If these were not remarkably supportive, caring people, such complete knowledge might be oppressive, but I have seen no evidence of that. Instead, children are buoyed by the expectations and compassion of teachers and administrators who can be tough and demanding because they believe these children can do well if they work hard, though they also know the realities that face them.

Transition to the High School

For many students, particularly those from supportive families, who are involved in extra-curricular activities or know they are going on to college, Island Regional High School offers a great deal. For example, a college student states, "for people like me who are ready, who know they are going to college, know what they have to do, the High School works very well, at least it did for me. I had some great teachers, like Dr. D., she was amazing."

However, transition to the consolidated High School (enrollment 1996-97 of 571) is difficult for some students from Three Mountains Grammar School who have a hard time adjusting and being successful. As they move from a class that is very small, often between eight and twelve students at Three Mountains School, to a class of well over one hundred, they confront problems in the larger school that are in many ways not surprising or extraordinary. For students accustomed to the nurturing of Three Mountains School dealing with these problems can become very difficult. If Three Mountains students lack strong parental support because, for example, their parents also feel uncomfortable in the larger school, problems they encounter are amplified. It almost seems as if these students have not toughened sufficiently and lose their direction without continuing support.[2]

A current student talks about going to the High School from Three Mountains School:

> It was so hard coming from Three Mountains - we had thirteen kids, we were a small class and very close class. The first day of high school a bunch of us girls were walking around going "you know who that is?" "No, do you?" You go from one hundred fifty kids in your school to one hundred fifty kids in your class. And these kids have more money. Big Harbor had about fifty kids in that class, so they all knew each other, they all knew someone. It was very hard going into that, specially you know people like "where are you from?" and "Three Mountains. Oh" - and it is like "What did I do?" I am from Three Mountains. I am proud I went to Three Mountains. I liked it, I wish I was back there....I would rather be from here not Big Harbor, where it is so big and you don't know everyone. I like knowing everyone, going down the road waving to people. I wave to everybody - and they wave back.

Moving to a larger school where they are not known is very difficult for some Three Mountains students.

The different teaching style at the high school may also alienate students. An experienced school administrator tells us:

> Sit in on High School classes and you get the picture fast, because teaching the majority, maybe not the majority but there are enough teachers at the secondary level who are just dishing it out to the kids. I think Mr. X does a good job with kids...but you have an awful lot [for whom] the subject matter is all they see. They are just throwing the material out, throwing the assignments out, with not much concern as to the kind of effect.

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[2] A finding that surprised, even shocked me, is that a disproportionate number of teenagers from Three Mountains suffer from depression in the high school.

A current student at the High School echoes this thought, "At Three Mountains, since it is such a small school the teachers can focus on students one at a time, but as there are so many kids here they have to take everyone at once, they can't stop what they are doing and help one person, they keep going."

A recent graduate, now studying at Tufts, adds: "In Three Mountains you know your teachers really well, you spend almost your entire year with them - English, Math. I spent three years with them; I know them really well. You develop a more personal relationship, whereas at the High School there will be a few teachers you get to know." Though this pattern typifies the teaching in many high schools, it is important to note the difference because it may not best serve all students from small rural communities.

A current student at the High School shows how size and distance from the High School make it difficult for students to get the help from teachers that they sometimes need:

> It is just one big class of thirty people. If you are not caught up, you can stay after school, but if you live twenty-five minutes away from the High School, that is really hard if you are a freshman and you have to take the bus. Some teachers take it slow, others just go at their pace or don't go at all. I don't want to bad mouth them. I did not pass algebra because I could not keep up with the class.

A group of students agree:

> Girl: I have Miss D. and she is a really great teacher and everything, but I am not getting the subject.
>
> B: What happens when you don't get it ?
>
> All: You don't get it.

B: Do you get help ?

Boy: It is hard to get help, the teacher has to be willing. I am not blaming the teacher: they have to give out, they have to put forth a major effort to give the students extra help because there are so many students to give student extra help.

Boy 2: 160, just Freshman.

Boy 3: It is hard. If you have to ask the page number of the assignment she will say "Didn't you hear? Go ask one of your classmates." She may not even remember.

Students are very forgiving of a system that makes it difficult for teachers to do a good job.

Teachers at the High School may suggest tutoring for Three Mountains students; however, for many this is not an option. Tutoring costs money and Three Mountains is located too far away from the High School for students to reach it easily, particularly younger students who cannot drive.

Girl: With Miss D., you have a test. You fail a test. What makes you think you are going to pass the next test ?

B: Am I understanding - you are failing?

Girl: That is what she told me.

B: And you aren't getting the kind of help you got in Three Mountains ?

Girl: Oh yes. This is what she told me, "OK that is nice, I don't know what you want to do about it," and I'm like saying - "I just don't get it."

Girl: I say, "Sorry, I don't get it" and she says "Sorry - you can get tutoring." I say, "No" [because my parents can't pay and I don't have transportation].

Some students who have done very good work at Three Mountains begin to drift by their Sophomore and Junior years, just when they need to focus on what they will do when they graduate from the high school. A former student says:

> Actually I was headed more to English classes, writing classes, but my Sophomore year...I got in really bad, that and I had an awful, he was a good guy, but he was an awful teacher....If you were there and you wanted to do something, you did it but if you didn't he just let you sit there. I need to be pushed, so I slacked off and I kind of failed in math. I ended up transferring after my Sophomore year, I went up to Temple Christian....Yes, yes, you got pushed more at Three Mountains than in the High School.

And current students state:

> [Three Mountains] was more structured, the classes were more rigid; if you didn't hand in your homework you got in trouble at Three Mountains; at the High School if you don't do it just knocks your grade off, you don't learn anything from it until the end of the year and by then it is too late. You don't get detentions, they just say or you didn't do it, mark it down and that does nothing for you as a student, trust me, you sit back and you say, "Oh I didn't do it, he didn't say anything," well you realize at the end of the year, wait a minute, and at Three Mountains definitely you did your work or you got in trouble.

Both these students said they now regret not preparing for college.

A young woman who attended Three Mountains School and graduated from the High School states:

> I think the main thing with the teachers are that, you know, I coach up at the High School, and I kinda would see it the same way. If I see a kid who wanted to go further then I am going to spend more time on them; if I just see 'I am kinda of here, I am glad I got a uniform and leave me alone,' then that is what I am going to do. I

> think in grammar school it may be a little bit different, if you can't get a kid interested in grammar school then they are not going to be interested in high school. I think that is a big difference with the teachers there [at Three Mountains]. They know that and they kind of are after you to do better. I think there is a lot of encouragement. Science wasn't my big thing, but Mr. Sawyer was saying, "You really got to study a bit harder," and I'd say "Oh all right." ...Then I did better, [got] a little bit of a kick.

For students used to the close attention of knowledgeable, caring teachers working with small classes, the less personal and more divided attention of teachers at the High School may not be enough to keep them focused on their work and away from distractions. However, students who have done well at Three Mountains School but lack parental support for post-secondary education, may begin to drift away from academic, college preparatory work in the large and relatively impersonal atmosphere of the High School.

Fear of being looked down on makes some students apprehensive about going to the high school. A current student at the High School notes, "We are backsiders because up until your Freshman year you can't drive, you saw nobody, we saw them at dances, but no one mixed - Three Mountains was on one side of the gym." A young father adds:

> It was always 'the backside' when I went to school here....Truth is they are in Big Harbor...that is where all the tourists go, and of course our answer was, and I believe this, you can have it. It is quiet over here, as you well know, even in summer we don't have that much traffic going through Seal Cove and whatnot, and it is just great. But people do, even adults say it to people I been to school with, and we been out twenty years, and they say it, with a smile on their face though. You know where the kids get it from, they get it from the parents, it comes right on down through. I think

it bothered kids years ago more than it bothers kids now.

These interviewees are right, I think, that derogatory comments are less wounding than in the past. Nevertheless, recent graduates of Three Mountains School and Island High School have also experienced such prejudice.

A graduate of Three Mountains School and Island High School states:

> I remember going from Pemetic to Three Mountains all the students said, "I can't believe you are going there." They looked down on it - Big Harbor and Northeast Harbor are more upper class, Big Harbor upper in business then South Harbor sort of getting to the fishing village but still a lot of boatyards - and look at Three Mountains mostly as the fisherman, and you have more of the laborers at Three Mountains. I felt some of it was sort of like different class issues.

Some students don't feel they are taken seriously or given the same opportunities as other students from the towns on the Island. When I asked if there were "any way in which you have felt there was anything negative about the way you were treated?", one boy responded emphatically, "Hell, yes," and others added stories in agreement, suggesting they were discriminated against because they come from Three Mountains.

A current student and her mother noted:

> Mother: Our sports program, you play ball, they got good coaches, but because it is Three Mountains, they [students] are the last ones looked at.
>
> Daughter: Definitely.
>
> Mother: ...unless they are super good ball players.
>
> Mother: I can think of two in the last eight years but other than that you don't hear of any Three Mountains kids on the team.

They also believe that Three Mountains students do not have equal access to academic programs and that the High School favors college bound students over those in the vocational and Business tracks.

> B: Have you ever felt the High School cares more about the academic kids who are doing the college program ?
>
> Daughter: Definitely
>
> Mother: I think that is common.

Belief that Three Mountains students do not get on teams or into special programs, academic and otherwise, makes access even more difficult for them, access that is already hampered by lack of transportation, distance from the high school, and poor preparation due to the paucity of programs and facilities at Three Mountains. Though I cannot document the validity of these beliefs, the fact that so many people share them makes them deterrents to participation by students in some of the most beneficial programs offered at the high school.

Family support for Three Mountains students diminishes when they go to the high school, as it does for many secondary students across the nation. Students and teachers comment on this. For example, the music teacher at Three Mountains, whose husband teaches music at the high school says, "I've watched throughout the years as they get older in the concerts. The elementary school is full, the Jr. high not so full, in high school not nearly as many parents go. We need to have parents stay involved."

Mr. Green, an experienced educator in Maine and lifelong resident of Three Mountains notes one reason: "The high schools in general I think do not encourage parents as much as they should." Cal Parker suggests others:

> When they moved to the high school, they [parents] did not continue that participation because of the competitiveness of the teams or because of the logistics of travel, because that has some bearing, the eleven or twelve miles to the High School or greater. I think they lose some of that connectedness to the school. They drift to the fringe, I think they do drift off to the fringe.

Others note that parents may not feel as comfortable at the high school as they have at Three Mountains School and may not feel they have much to contribute to their child's education at the higher level. A member of the first class to graduate from the consolidated High School reports that her parents never visited the school once during the entire four years that she was a student. A former Selectman reports, "Some parents say this, they tell me, that when their children go to the High School their job is finished, they don't feel so capable and don't feel needed." A mother adds:

> I think that parents on the whole are a decent part of the kids lives, even at the High School. It is harder to be a part of their lives at the High School. It think it can be intimidating to the parents to, try to go over to the High School and get information, not that the people aren't open over there, any one of us can go over there, but it is more intimidating. Three Mountains is so small and you walk through the door and you are right there, you go to the High School and you've got to find out where you are going.

A recent graduate says: "Well - there is a big difference between like the parent-teacher communication and a big difference in what the parents are expecting of the kids anymore, cause they think they are getting older."

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Students now at the High School say:

> Girl 1: They [my parents] find it really hard to come here, specially going on to work - time wise, they don't have any time. They spend so much time running around they don't have enough time to enjoy.
>
> Girl 2: It is hard because they want to come to the games, but between work and other stuff...it is so time-consuming.

Students who do receive parental support seem to treasure it, crediting their parents with their successes and talking about how important their families were to their decisions about what they would do after high school. They say their families taught them values and made them feel appreciated. A small group of young adults, just starting their own families, state:

> Man 1: I think it still comes back to how you are raised with your family.
>
> Woman: [his sister]: Parents, definitely all parents.
>
> Man 2 [their cousin]: It all comes back to parents.

Parental support and encouragement offers students validation of their own worth and the importance of their work and activities at school. Students who receive this support are extremely grateful to their families and feel it was a critical ingredient in their successful completion of high school.

Parental support helps keep students involved in extra-curricular activities, which in turn seems to keep them involved with school and their academic work as well. Many people, including teachers, students and parents, commented on the link between involvement with extra-curricular activities and academic work. They point out that parental involvement is critical in keeping a student interested in such activities and that involvement with extra-curricular programs such as sports, drama, and music, helps keep kids out of trouble.

> B: I have heard from other people that ...some of the Three Mountains kids didn't have sports at the High School. Is there anything about that way the system is structured so those kids aren't pulled into something?
>
> Brad: I would say family support would be a big thing.
>
> Dwayne and Tad: Yeah.
>
> Tad: There was a lot of kids didn't do sports but they did band, and they did just as well in band as we did in sports and they followed that up.
>
> Tina: And drama.
>
> Tad: And I think the High School has one of the best programs in drama, that was a big help for most of the other kids, lots of good music support.
>
> B: How were you feeling support from your family for the things you did ?
>
> Brad: They supported us in the things we did, which for us was sports, she did try the flute for awhile, I didn't really get into instruments. It was support for what we did and we choose sports. ...What we chose was sports and they supported us, they took us to Peewee Games and they would come to the games.
>
> B: And the other parents, the kids who were drifting away ?
>
> Brad: I don't think they had support at home.
>
> Dwayne: Yeah.

Grandparents and other family members also commented on the importance of extra-curricular activities to students at the high school, though they did not link it directly to deteriorating academic performance. For example, a grandmother says, "Kids from Three Mountains now going to the high school don't participate as much in the activities like sports as they did in Three Mountains - like [my grandson], his grades are falling off." Young parents think about their own children.

The impact of involvement in extra-curricular activities seems to be enormous and circular. Improvement often means that students they proceed to the next level, which gives their parents more opportunity to support them and take pride in their achievements. Here a father shows what it means to him:

> They do other things too, the kids here are in the music program, and the pageants they put on, you get to the High School, I used to love to watch [my daughter]. We went to Jesus Christ Superstar - I walked out and I was grinning from ear to ear. I was basically proud... You sit back and say "that's my daughter" and all of a sudden these people are all standing up cheering and whistling and hey that's my kid and it makes you feel pretty good.

Involvement in sports, drama, and music also takes time and dedication, which deters students from being drawn into drugs and other less positive activities. It also keeps them focused on their academic work because keeping their grades above a certain level is a prerequisite to participation in an extra-curricular activity.

Unfortunately, for many students at Three Mountains, particularly younger ones who depend on the school bus for transportation, becoming involved in extra-curricular activities is very difficult.

B: How many of you are involved in extra curricular stuff
and how was it getting in?

All : Hard!

Girl: I am a cheerleader - it took me two years to get onto the squad, because we didn't have them [at Three Mountains]... it was hard coming in. We don't have anything. In Northeast Harbor their parents play tennis, but we don't have any of that. I made it my Freshman year, but I didn't get to play.

Boy: There is only a few going out for the basketball team, just a couple who tried, it was really hard for us to make it.

B: So a lot of the Three Mountains kids didn't try, is that what you are saying ?

Girl 2: To be on the team you have to show that you will do exceptionally well to compete with them.

Boy: When we were at Three Mountains we had no problem - good in soccer, good in basketball.

B: When you are younger, being in a little school you might get more opportunity to play and then you go to the bigger school you are more capable because you have had more experience, but there is also more competition and they have a full size gym and that sort of stuff ?

Boy: Yeah - and our gym is a lot smaller.

Girls and Boys: And Three Mountains is half hour from the High School. That is hard, specially for sports.

Girl 3: Three Mountains is a bad location because it is so far from everything, and there are not very many people.

Boy 3: Socially it is useless.

> Girl: Because not very many people from Three Mountains try out for things it is harder and harder to get rides home. You have to ask your parents really hard, and they have to come and it is really hard as it is so far away.
>
> Boy: Things get done at eleven; we don't get home till twelve.
>
> B: What about your parents, how do they feel about coming to the high school?
>
> Girl 1: They get tired of always having to come - if, well, you get a ride home with someone else
>
> Girl 2: But it is really hard to get a ride home.

The distance, the time it takes to get home, the unreliability of transportation, and the fact that few parents are easily available to pick up their children, all conspire to make it difficult for students from Three Mountains to participate in extra-curricular activities. When fewer students participate, it is even harder for others from Three Mountains to join because there is such a small group with whom to get a ride or to encourage their participation.

At the High School, students from Three Mountains encounter the more worldly lifestyle of students from other towns on the island and negative behaviors like involvement with drugs, cigarettes, and alcohol. One member of a group of high school students put it this way: "In Three Mountains school you are sheltered...you come here and you like, oh my God, I didn't know that !" Too many students from Three Mountains get pulled into this culture, something their families and other students fear. Students who are involved with extra-curricular activities or are clearly focused on a goal and supported in that by their parents seem to avoid such dangerous entanglements.

Many students from Three Mountains do not get involved in sports, drama, or music at the High School, and people in the community worry that these students will get involved in other activities. Fifth generation resident, Mr. R states:

> Part of it was the different group there - the Big Harbor element I think more or less changed a lot of boys there....Lots of dope showed up, a lot of things like that they didn't have before, and Big Harbor has had its inroads, people moving in, and they bring a lot of the stuff with them.

And two younger people, a brother and sister add:

> Brad: And we also lost the ones from Three Mountains. I knew all of them and had them all in the same class from K through Eighth grade except a few who came in later.
>
> B: So you 'lost' them?
>
> Brad: The ones who stayed in sports you stayed with for the most part.
>
> B: I wonder if some of the kids who got lost get really lost?
>
> Brad: There are bad influences as soon as you step across at least from Three Mountains at the High School. I can't speak for the other students, but I know what they were at Three Mountains.
>
> Tina: They teach the others trouble...
>
> Brad: They get in trouble with the teachers here but they weren't *trouble*. When you get in to the High School it went beyond the teachers and to what you did after school and it was *trouble*.

A current student and her mother discuss the impact of negative influences on students who are not involved in activities at the high school:

> Mother: Our kids leave here sports being their whole thing. They get to high school, they don't get on a team, you look and see what they are doing instead, they are in drugs.
>
> Daughter: Really, my class, oh my word.
>
> Mother: We can give you examples of those kids.
>
> Daughter: My best friend in Eighth grade she loves courses, she loves books, she loves just learning. My freshman year, the first day of school she got in with that crowd.
>
> B: And this was mostly a crowd not from Three Mountains?
>
> Daughter: They were Big Harbor kids plain and simple

Peer pressure and the desire for friends are very strong. Students who are not involved in extra-curricular activities and know few people at the High School can easily be drawn into inappropriate activities and friendships because students from other towns who are "on the fringe" are also looking for friends.

Residents of Three Mountains, though they are aware of drug traffic and use in the town, also believe that most of the students in the grammar school are well-insulated from involvement with drugs and other negative influences. Obviously, there are domestic and other problems within families, but for the most part, people from Three Mountains believe children in the town are "innocent" in comparison with students in the other island elementary schools. This leads to their concern that Three Mountains students will become involved with "negative" influences when they enter the High School.

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Students, parents, and teachers identify another problem in the atmosphere of the High School that they feel is not conducive to good work: lack of discipline and respect. Many parents and teachers contrasted the behavior of students at Three Mountains and their respectful attitude towards parents, teachers, and other students with the less disciplined behavior of students at the High School. Many people felt this was a significant factor in the deterioration of student performance in high school.

Mrs. D., a Three Mountains School teacher, states, "Well I just think that maybe sometimes at the high school level there is less expectation as far as personal discipline. What is required is a laid back, lackadaisical atmosphere, whereas I think the kids' [behavior is] somewhat less than ... what we expect here. They are held accountable more here." Doug Gott, former School Board Member and long-time resident says, "They put up with too much foolishness at the high school. Another parent, adds, "discipline has broken down there." A former student responded to a question about work habits at the high school, "You don't care, there's not the same respect for the teachers, something happens." Another former student says, "I think the respect is gone [now], I still call my teachers Mr. or Mrs."

A girl currently at the High School notes "with lesser amounts of kids there is more control [at Three Mountains School]," and another student and her mother discuss the differences between the High School and Three Mountains School:

Mother: The other thing I have seen over the years that Three Mountains school has, and I don't think the High School has, is respect. We were always raised, there was a certain degree of respectfulness, whether you liked the teacher or not

Daughter: Definitely.

Mother: That's not in the High School anymore.

B: Do you think it is still part of the atmosphere what is expected at Three Mountains ?

Daughter: Oh definitely.

Lack of respect for adults shown by students from the other three towns towards their teachers is something, then, that bothers people from Three Mountains.

People in Three Mountains identify reasons behind the change, which they see reflected throughout society, not just in the High School. A student and her parents discuss these possible causes.

B: How do kids learn to be that way - respectful?

Father: A lot of it right now has to do with the home life, mothers stayed home, can't do it now, can't have a family and not have both spouses working,

Mother: We could do that with the first two kids, but there came a time you couldn't make it that way. I think there is a big thing, kids in their attitudes towards parents are definitely not the same.

Daughter: I think respect is time at home.

Mother: Parents don't have time to be bothered with these kids - why should the kids respect them ?

Daughter: It was never like that - it was always 'respect.'

Several people who graduated from the High School within the past ten years mentioned concern that the atmosphere at the school changed noticeably in a short period of time. Students, parents, and grammar school teachers link lower expectations for self-discipline, attitudes towards work at the high school, involvement with drugs, and diminished respect for adults with less involvement with extra-curricular activities. It is not within the scope of this dissertation to research the validity of this connection, but I think it is important to note that it was made independently by almost all interviewees and focus group members.

Guidance Counselors at the High School, as at most high schools, are responsible for more students than they can possibly know well. Two Guidance Counselors at Island High School work with 571 students and their families, overseeing placement in classes, guidance about post-secondary plans, as well as a myriad of other concerns. In addition, they meet with all Eighth grade students who will be entering as Freshmen to design their course of study. This is an impossible job, a legacy of James Conant's many unfortunate ideas for American High Schools. There is no way the two counselors at MDI High School can effectively deal with so many students, or provide the knowledgeable, caring guidance students from Three Mountains received from teachers at Three Mountains School. Three Mountains parents reflect on the marginal impact the Guidance Counselors had on post-secondary plans for their children:

> B: What kind of guidance were they getting at the school. Did the guidance program help them...?

Jackie: You mean [states last name]? I don't know. Over at the High School ?

B: Yes.

Jackie: Oh, I don't know. They suggested, I think, they gave them pamphlets, I don't know, I don't know. {states full name], isn't that his name? The only thing I know, they would have gone there for different brochures, because I know they applied for different schools.

B: And when your kids went to the High School, you and the kids had pretty much decided what they were going to do ?

Jackie: They decided what they were going to do.

Present and former students from Three Mountains believe they are disproportionately placed in lower track classes and have a hard time getting the programs they want.

Students currently at the high school explain:

Boy 1: Last year the Eighth Grade teacher had told us a lot about it, and the Guidance Counselors from here came down, but they seemed kind of reluctant to give us all high level courses, like I have all honors courses, but he said, "You are going for a tough schedule," but it is simple.

Boy 2: I didn't understand it when they was talking to me. I took six classes in the first semester when I didn't know...I had two study halls.

B: You would have liked to take more?

Boy 2: Yeah, get more credit.

The initial meeting at which students and the Guidance Counselors decide on the course of study, sometimes for the entire High School career, usually takes no more than fifteen minutes. One Ninth Grader commented: "The main thing is that they make you decide what you want to do before you actually know; the Guidance Counselor says, 'What do you want to do when you are a Senior, what classes do you want to take?' Well, I don't know."

For some students, getting into demanding courses can be difficult. For others, getting approval for an easy schedule may be too easy. One parent, himself once a high school principal explains:

> I think a lot of times, though - the kids who have signed up for courses - that the parents have no idea. The parents think they are taking certain courses, but they are taking something altogether different. I know [my son] did. He wanted to graduate in the Junior year, he had enough credits. I said, "You have plenty of time to work." He took seven periods of shop - all he did is horse around. That year was half through before I found out, and I was on the School Board.

A member of the first class to graduate from the consolidated high school shows us how the lack of guidance affected a very able student who was not getting support from her parents:

> D: ...in the classroom everybody had equal opportunity to do whatever, if you had it. When I was a Freshman, I was mixed with all the kids from the island in honors classes. I said, "OK, this is like, for the first time the slate is level, I can do this." I was prepared ...in the classroom, and I went into honors math. I was two years in high honors. Then kind of like [one of my daughters], I wondered why am I working so hard, doing so well when I am going not anywhere ? I switched from college to business [track] and played harder, so I ended up not going [to college].
>
> B: When you decided to change your program what happened, you just decided on your own?

> D: Oh yeah, I didn't ask anybody and I felt really good about it ... because I had taken charge of my own life, made my own decisions, even though it meant stepping back. It felt good. I felt, I can do this, I will do this my way.
>
> B: Did any of the teachers talk to you about this, the Guidance Counselors?
>
> D: No.

The structure of counseling at the high school, combined with decreasing parental involvement with the school and with students, creates a situation in which students who are vulnerable may get lost. Very able students who lack parental or family support are also vulnerable as they confront a future that looks as if it offers only limited options.

A current student shares her opinion:

> You have to fight to get in to see the Guidance. The one thing I would change in that High School is the Guidance. That was the worst. I liked my Guidance Counselor [but] he is useless as a bump on a log...I like him as a person, but I am finding out things my Senior year that I should have found out years ago.
>
> B: Did he ever talk to you about it ?
>
> H: We talked about it, but like I said I wasn't very vocal.

This student, like too many others, reserved her feelings and never talked openly with her Guidance Counselor because he had so many other students to work with he couldn't take time to get to know her and help her feel comfortable.

Students feel that they are well prepared at Three Mountains School to do the academic work a the High School; in fact, some feel they are over-prepared and that the work at the High School is undemanding and boring. One student put it this way: "We spent the entire eighth grade year preparing for High School. Then when we got here it was so simple." Another added that academically she felt "over-prepared," while a boy stated that his ninth grade year "has been kind of boring, very boring." However, the lack of equipment, particularly in Science, Art, computers, and Theater made it very difficult to compete with students from the other island schools that are better equipped.

> H: You go from a small school over to the High School and it is like you don't have the experiences that they do and that makes it harder to keep up with the, I could not have told you what a socket wrench is a year ago, I am in a shop class now and it , in Big Harbor they taught these things in the school. I have no chance, I know nothing about them.... It is harder for you to want to do something you don't know anything about when they have a background.
>
> Father: How do you expect a kid to compete with kids who have had it and kids who haven't had it and expect them to keep up with the rest of the class.
>
> Daughter: But we don't have a shop and we don't have a lab...or a theater.

One student says:

> We had something great, [we had] Mr. Sawyer [who] is a great teacher - no we had no lab, there wasn't even a sink, just a poster of Einstein and a monkey.

And another boy adds:

> The teacher [at high school] says, "Go get the beaker." The what?

Another student sums it up as follows:

> On paper this High School blows Three Mountains out of the water, but when you are actually here it is very simple [easy].

Strong teaching , small size, one-on-one relationship between students and their teachers compensate, in part, for lack of facilities, but one result is an unforeseen problem.

Students see a gap between the way their teachers at Three Mountains School view the academic demands of the High School and the reality they encounter their Freshman year.

> Girl: When I was in Eighth grade the teachers made it out like it was so scary, you are going to get lost.
>
> Many students, talking at once: You are going to have so much homework. You got here and you were so scared, and it was nothing. So simple.... Nothing like they said. It is not what it made it out to be. Not at all.
>
> Boy: I swear C. left a trail the first day. He was bugging out, it was unreal. You are afraid you are going to get beat up by every other person. It is still like that now, not many seniors like you, for not apparent reasons, just cause you are a freshmen.
>
> Boy 2: I think we just came into school just a little more prepared than the other kids. We had been told this, so we were petrified. It was going to be a lot of homework, but we got here and there wasn't as much homework as they had told us and we said, 'Oh this isn't so bad.' See a lot [of students] from the other schools, the High School kids from the other towns, they hear you don't have to take many courses, you don't have to take the hard courses, they only heard that from their cranks at the High School, so when they got here they kind of had a big shock - 'Oh my god, why do I have so much homework?'
>
> Girl: I don't think they should have said all that stuff to us because you are already insecure about going to a big new school or whatever and adding that on top, it was kind of overwhelming.
>
> Boy: Your head just went into meltdown.

These students added that they got their information about the High School from the teachers, not from siblings or other students.

In their attempt to prepare students, teachers at Three Mountains may be over-emphasizing the rigors of the High school, particularly the academic demands. Students stated that the Three Mountains teachers "think it [high school] is much harder than what it is, when you are here it is actually very simple." This seems to unnecessarily intimidate students and may, not coincidentally, result in their placement in lower tracks and less challenging courses.

The qualitative data gives us a picture of the way students and their families and members of the Three Mountains community view the High School. This data is, in large part, confirmed by the quantitative data.

QUANTITATIVE DATA:

Comparing the responses of Eighth Grade students who attend Three Mountains Grammar School and Ninth Graders from Three Mountains who attend Island High School shows ways in which these students feel differently about their lives and schools. The sample is small; however, it does include most of the possible population. Not all the responses are consistent, and certainly the angst of adolescence may be blamed for some of the alienation Ninth Graders feel. However, we are comparing a population that is similar in many respects: students from Three Mountains who are only six to twelve months apart in age, and for whom the significant differing variable is attending the grammar school or high school. (One interesting difference between the two groups is that a much higher percentage of the parents of the Eighth Graders went to college.)

There are significant differences in the ways in which Eighth and Ninth Graders respond to questions on the National Center for Student Aspirations survey. Students in the Eighth Grade at Three Mountains School show more commitment to achievement, greater enjoyment of their daily lives, and a higher level of inspiration and ambition than students who graduated from Three Mountains Grammar School only a year before and attend the Island Regional High School.[3]

TABLE ONE
Results of Aspirations Survey, Part Two
Comparison of 8th and 9th Grade Students from Three Mountains

ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION		
Percent of students who agree or strongly disagree.	8th Grade	9th Grade
I like to be very good at what I do.	94.7	100.0
I feel I can do just about anything I want to if I put my mind to it.	94.4	92.3
I never make plans or set goals for myself.	11.8	23.1
Getting good grades is not important to me.	15.8	38.5
I can be very disciplined and push myself.	94.7	75

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[3] Survey results are reported in the Appendix.

ENJOYMENT of LIFE		
Percent of students who agree or strongly disagree.	8th Grade	9th Grade
I usually feel tired and bored.	22.2	69.2
I often have trouble getting motivated to do things.	31.6	53.8
I don't seem to succeed no matter what I do.	11.1	30.8
I am not interested in very many things.	5.3	23.1
I am often in a good mood.	94.7	69.2
INSPIRATION		
Percent of students who agree or strongly disagree.	8th Grade	9th Grade
Most of the things I do in school I find enjoyable.	81	61.5
School causes a great deal of stress for me.	42.9	84.6
When I'm at school, time seems to fly by.	66.7	69.2
School is important to my life on a regular basis.	95.2	69.2
I find it hard to concentrate in classes.	23.8	61.5
I find excitement in almost every class I attend.	42.9	46.2
AMBITIONS		
Percent of students who agree or strongly disagree.	8th Grade	9th Grade
What I learn in school will benefit my future.	90.5	84.6
I give little thought to my future.	4.8	38.5
I am looking forward to a successful career.	100.0	92.3
I have high goals and expectations for myself.	95	84.6
I don't expect very much of myself in the future.	0	23.1
Most things I learn in school are important to my future.	90.5	92.3
ACHIEVEMENT		

Overall, when I think about my classes...	8th Grade	9th Grade
I stop trying when I don't understand some things .	20	23.1
I believe I can always improve/ improve.	95.2	100
In general, my teachers...		
tell me to keep trying when I struggle.	100	84.6
like it when I try my best even when I get a wrong answer.	100	69.2
tell me I'm doing a good job when I try my best.	94.7	76.9
let me know it is important to be successful in school.	100	66.7
don't . check home work	0	38.5
BELONGING		
Overall, when I think about my classes	8th Grade	9th Grade
I never have the opportunity to work with others.	10	38.5
my thoughts are accepted.	94.4	84.6
In general, my teachers ...		
encourage me to help others in class.	78.9	76.9
accept that different students have different opinions	100.0	69.2
value my opinions.	83.3	69.2
do not value different opinions.	22.2	8.3
CURIOSITY		
Overall, when I think about my classes...	8th Grade	9th Grade
I learn about things I did not know before.	90.5	84.6
I explore problems.	80	76.9
I seek solutions to complex problems.	90	69.2

In general, my teachers...		
want students to be interested in learning.	100.0	92.3
make me uncomfortable when I ask for help.	11.1	30.8
encourage me to learn new things.	95	83.3
discourage me from learning new things.	5.3	30.8
EMPOWERMENT		
Overall, when I think about my classes...	8th Grade	9th Grade
I am not allowed to express my thoughts.	19	38.5
In general, my teachers...		
allow me to make choices about what I learn.	89.5	53.8
ask for my opinions/ideas.	72.2	83.3
treat boys and girls the same.	55	66.7
make it difficult for me to "be myself."	36.8	33.3
EXCITEMENT		
Overall, when I think about my classes.	8th Grade	9th Grade
I leave with a feeling of accomplishment.	85.7	69.2
I am usually bored.	42.9	53.8
I learn about things in the real world.	81	61.5
I never have fun.	5.3	30.8
In general, my teachers...		
make class exciting.	66.7	58.3
MENTORING		
Overall, when I think about my classes.	8th Grade	9th Grade
no one encourages me.	23.8	41.7
classmates never talk to me about what I am doing.	15	38.5

In general, my teachers...		
care about my success in class.	95	92.3
serve as role models to me.	63.2	41.7
expect me to succeed and help me to do so.	77.8	92.3
care about my problems and feelings.	78.9	69.2
RISK-TAKING		
Overall, when I think about my classes...	8th Grade	9th Grade
I feel comfortable asking questions.	80	84.6
I feel comfortable going to another student for help.	95.2	83.3
In general, my teachers...		
do not allow me to explore as much as I want to.	15	30.8
encourage me to find answers on my own.	100.0	84.6
support me when I take chances in the classroom.	71.4	61.5
are too critical and insensitive to others.	5.3	30.8
SELF-CONFIDENCE		
Overall, when I think about my classes...	8th Grade	9th Grade
I am confident in my ability to do well.	90	75
I find it enjoyable regardless of what others may think.	60	38.5
I dislike almost everything I do.	23.8	30.8
I have a generally positive attitude regarding learning.	100.0	83.3
I set high goals and expectations for myself.	90.5	69.5
In general, my teachers...		
make me feel shy or uncomfortable around them.	10.5	23.1
think I am a poor student.	5.3	23.1

For example, the percentage of students in Ninth Grade responding that they do not make plans or set goals, or that getting good grades is not important to them, is twice that of Eighth Graders. Ninth Graders are much more likely to feel tired and bored, to have trouble getting motivated, to be disinterested in things around them, and are less frequently in a good mood than Eighth Grade students. The percentage of Ninth Graders reporting that school causes them stress is twice that of Eighth Graders. Almost a quarter of Ninth Graders state that they don't expect much of themselves in the future, while no Eighth Graders express such low expectations.

It is easy to undercut the importance of these discrepancies by attributing them to the tribulations of adolescence. However, that argument must be measured against the fact that Ninth Graders say they *feel* much worse than do students who are from very similar backgrounds, and whose only difference is that they are not yet at the high school. Surely, how students feel about their lives and about their school has value. If Ninth Graders from Three Mountains feel so much worse than Eighth graders, then something in their lives is not going well. The most significant variable, besides possible onset of puberty, that differentiates these students is that they are in different schools.[4]

Using the summary data prepared by the NCSA we can compare some responses of Three Mountains Students against a sample of Seniors from

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[4] Principal Perkins states that the two groups of students are roughly similar in age and sex distribution, and both were considered to be "good" classes.

Maine, against a sample of high school students in Maine and another sample of high school students throughout the United States.

TABLE TWO

Comparison of Three Mountains Students with State and National Data

ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION					
Percent of students who agree or strongly disagree.	8th Grade	9th Grade	ME Srs	ME H.S.	U.S.
I never make plans or set goals for myself.	11.8	23.1	28	22	27
ENJOYMENT of LIFE					
Percent of students who agree or strongly disagree.	8th Grade	9th Grade	ME Srs	ME H.S.	U.S.
I usually feel tired and bored.	22.2	69.2	42	47	39
INSPIRATION					
Percent of students who agree or strongly disagree.	8th Grade	9th Grade	ME Srs	ME H.S.	U.S.
Most of the things I do in school I find enjoyable.	81	61.5	60	52	53
I find excitement in almost every class I attend.	42.9	46.2	36	26	27
AMBITIONS					
Percent of students who agree or strongly disagree.	8th Grade	9th Grade	ME Srs	ME H.S.	U.S.
What I learn in school will benefit my future.	90.5	84.6	88	90	89
I give little thought to my future.	4.8	38.5	76	77	73
I am looking forward to a successful career.	100	92.3	97	95	96
I have high goals and expectations for myself.	95	84.6	92	85	85
I don't expect very much of myself in the	0	23.1	78	89	78

future.					
Most things I learn in school are important to my future.	90.5	92.3	88	90	89
ACHIEVEMENT					
Overall, when I think about my classes...	8th Grade	9th Grade	ME Srs	ME H.S.	U.S.
I believe I can always improve.	95.2	100	95	91	92
BELONGING					
In general, my teachers					
value my opinions.	83.3	69.2	73	67	63
EMPOWERMENT					
In general, my teachers...					
make it difficult for me to "be myself."	36.8	33.3	59	64	57
EXCITEMENT					
Overall, when I think about my classes.	8th Grade	9th Grade	ME Srs	ME H.S.	U.S.
I leave with a feeling of accomplishment.	85.7	69.2	73	61	59
I am usually bored.	42.9	53.8	42	47	39
In general, my teachers...					
make class exciting.	66.7	58.3	55	50	48
MENTORING					
In general, my teachers...					
care about my success in class.	95	92.3	81	79	79
serve as role models to me.	63.2	41.7	52	43	41
expect me to succeed and help me to do so.	77.8	92.3	81	79	79
care about my problems and feelings.	78.9	69.2	65	64	59

It seems important that the responses of Three Mountains Eighth Graders is more positive in answer to almost every question than the responses of the other students who were surveyed.

The Aspirations Survey looks for the degree to which a school satisfies preconditions the NCSA has identified as important for high aspirations. Comparing the responses of Eighth and Ninth Graders shows that Three Mountains School does a better job than the high school in providing the setting in which students can develop high aspirations. The survey results also confirm informants' observations that fewer teachers at the high school check homework for accuracy or completion.

Students in Eighth Grade are more highly oriented to achieve, report greater feelings of belonging, feel more curious, more fully supported by their teachers, and slightly more empowered than Ninth Graders from Three Mountains. Three Mountains Eighth Graders feel excited by class, and only 5.3 percent say they never have fun, in contrast to 30.8 percent of Ninth Graders. Almost twice as high a percentage of Ninth Graders say no one encourages them. 63 percent of Eighth Graders report that teachers serve as mentors, while only 41.7 percent of Ninth Graders agree with that statement. Again, more Three Mountains Eighth Graders feel encouraged to take risks than Ninth Graders at the high school from Three Mountains. The scores concerning Self-Confidence seem particularly noteworthy: they indicate Eighth Graders from Three Mountains are much more self-confident than

SUMMARY:

Important differences characterize Three Mountains Grammar School and Island Regional High School. These differences coupled with exposure to some negative influences, make transition to the high school difficult for some students from Three Mountains. The high school does not offer the nurturing, supportive base for students that they received at Three Mountains School. As they make their transition, Three Mountains students move from the influence of teachers they have known for many years, and who know them, to a new peer group. They can get discouraged by the lack of adult support and the difficulties of maintaining aspirations for post-secondary education. If they are in a peer group that eschews the value of higher education, or their parents don't understand why they should go on in school, they are more vulnerable. Many are simply unable to sustain the goals they may have had in grammar school and cannot go against the values of the culture that tells them post-secondary education is unattainable and not worth their investment of time and money.

In their transition to Island Regional High School, many students from Three Mountains enter a larger and different world. Many of them do well academically, socially, and in extra-curricular activities because they have been well prepared at Three Mountains School and have supportive parents. However, for those who are less confident, less sophisticated, or less assertive, the transition is difficult and goals to which they may have aspired begin to seem impossible to achieve. Just at the time they make this transition, the support Three Mountains students have enjoyed from parents, teachers, coaches and their community begins to disappear. It is as if having been nurtured on very rich milk, they are weaned so suddenly that some find it difficult to thrive. It is in the critical years of high school that some students find it too hard to hold onto the goal of continuing their education after graduation. For these students what they perceive as the realities of adulthood in Three Mountains begin to cloud over dreams of childhood and they settle for a way of life that is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain without an income based on professional skills.

Bibliography and/or full text available on request.
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One Teacher Primary Schools

England, Scotland and Wales, 1996-97

Prepared by Brigham Young University for
Presentation at the
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Tucson, Arizona
September 26, 1997

Principal Investigators

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Dr. Steve Hite, Professor of Education
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Presented by
Ellen Powley

Small rural one-teacher schools play a major role in the education of youth not only in America, but also in other major countries of the world. A study of one-teacher schools in the United States was completed last year. A companion study of one-teacher primary schools in England, Scotland and Wales is now underway. This presentation summarizes information about these schools regarding teachers, students, school buildings and community support.

This inquiry considers the condition of government supported one-teacher primary schools in the British Isles during the 1996-97 school year. The data collected from this study was from teachers of these schools regarding the teachers, students, school facilities and rural communities where one-teacher schools exist. In order to locate the one-teacher schools in England, Scotland and Wales and obtain the data, a questionnaire was sent to teachers of schools in rural communities whose school population was less than twenty-five pupils. (England, Scotland and Wales school statistics do not identify one-teacher primary schools.) Underlying this research is a basic question: How do one-teacher primary schools serve the students and the community?

As a research assistant under the direction of Dr. Ivan Muse, Professor of Education, Department of Educational Leadership and Foundations, Brigham Young University I conducted this investigation from January through June 1997 while living in London, England. Before returning to the United States at the end of July 1997, I visited a sampling of one-teacher primary schools described in this study. Dr. Muse is actively involved with rural school research and is recognized by the National Rural Education Association for his distinguished involvement with and celebration of rural schools.

A 1996 study in the United States (Jensen, A., *One-teacher public elementary schools,* 1996) revealed information worthy of future study. This report indicates the number of operating one-teacher schools is in significant decline. The quality of education available in one-teacher schools has improved over time through better technology, advanced communication, modernization of transportation and facilities and teacher preparation. These one-teacher schools are important to the communities they serve. Moreover, teachers, students and communities indicate satisfaction with this method of education.

In the early stages of the British investigation, I studied the demographics in the British Isles and I believed there were existing one-teacher schools in rural areas. Prior to initiating this study, I collected current information from education officers in the Isles of Scilly, the Shetland Islands, and the Western Isles confirming the existence of one-teacher schools on these islands. I also discovered that in Scotland there were only nineteen students per teacher, thus assisting in the identification of the Scottish schools. Meanwhile, school address labels were obtained from the UK School Government Publishing Company. Three hundred forty-three surveys were sent to teachers of schools that might be one-teacher schools. I sent surveys as follows: eighty-one schools in England, two hundred fifteen schools in Scotland, and forty-seven in Wales.

Ninety-three surveys were returned, with fifty-four indicating positive identification of one-teacher schools, thirty-nine indicating the school had employed more than one teacher, and other schools noted that increased enrollment during the past year resulted in the hiring of more teachers. It is interesting to note that staffing adjustments are made through out the year as school enrollment changes. Five returns indicated that the schools had been disbanded.

Phone calls were made to fifty schools that did not return surveys. During these phone conversations I learned that many of these schools had over twenty-five pupils enrolled, several had over one-hundred enrolled and six schools had changed within the past five years from a one-teacher school to a three or more teacher school. The reasons for the changes in these six schools were caused by families moving from urban to rural areas. Nine additional one-teacher schools were mentioned by teachers on the returned surveys. I spoke to the teachers of these additional schools and confirmed their status as one-teacher primary schools. Three reasons were given by teachers for not returning the surveys (1) lack of time to complete survey, (2) fear of being recognized as a one-teacher school because of closure threats, and (3) distrust in surveys.

As of August 1, 1997, the researcher positively identified sixty-three one-teacher primary schools in England, Scotland and Wales existing during the school year 1996-97. Fifty-four were surveyed.

England: three schools surveyed; five identified

Scotland: forty-seven surveyed; fifty-three identified

Wales: four surveyed; five identified

Data Obtained from Surveys Completed in Spring, 1997

The data is reported in four general areas: teachers, students, school buildings and community support. The majority of teachers in one-teacher schools in England, Scotland and Wales in 1996-97 were female, married, in the forty to forty-nine years old age group and had spouses that were employed in semi-skilled or skilled jobs. Typically these teachers have spent over twenty years in the teaching field with five to fifteen years teaching experience in their present one-teacher schools and expected to teach in the same school next year. Fifty-nine percent of the teachers surveyed held certificates only, 19 percent Bachelor degrees, 11 percent Bachelor degrees with a postgraduate certificate of education (PCGE), and 11 percent Master's degrees.

Seventy-five percent of the teachers planned on teaching in the same school next year. Seventy percent were purchasing their own home in the local education area where they taught. Teachers traveled on the average of five miles to the school house, thirty-six miles to the hospital, thirty-six miles to a major market for shopping, twenty-five miles to the nearest secondary school, 113 miles to a college or university, and over two hundred miles to a parent's home. It is not unusual to consider that these schools are located in remote areas in the British Isles, with a significant number located on the islands in Scotland. Eighty-seven percent of the teachers indicated the reason for teaching in their current school was the desire to teach in a small school. Only 22 percent of the teachers indicated they were currently living near family members.

The average teacher spends between eight and ten hours each day on instruction, preparation, administration, correcting papers, visiting with parents, and custodial duties. Further, they manage the lunch preparation, eat lunch with the pupils, supervise the meal cleanup, and direct playground activities. Finally, they perform custodial duties after school both in the building and in the school yard. It is rare (1.8 percent) to find a teacher who is paid additional salary for these further duties.

Equally important, the teachers reported that they provided the following services for their pupils. Most (88 percent) reported providing remedial reading, over half (51 percent) teach special education, and nearly all (98 percent) administer student testing. In addition, 88 percent teach computers, manage media and school supplies; 72 percent teaching physical education, 85 percent teach art, and

65 percent teach music.

Overwhelmingly, these teachers like their work and are committed to the small school and the family atmosphere it provides. Only 5.5 percent of the teachers reported frustrations in their job responsibilities; most of their concerns regarded a lack of team sports, a lack of competition for older children and outdated facilities.

Teachers consistently mentioned their devotion to the individual student in a caring classroom atmosphere as central to their teaching experience. A significant number of teachers (70 percent) reported that the school served fewer than ten families. A majority (54 percent) sent their children five miles or less to school. Teachers rated their pupils average to high achievers and teachers reported that their students easily adjusted to secondary school after graduating from the primary school.

In the past five years, 45 percent of the one-teacher schools surveyed showed an increased enrollment. Of the 38.6 percent schools that showed a decreased enrollment, 27 percent indicated less than five student decrease over five years and 11 percent reported a decrease in more than five students in the same time. Nearly 16 percent indicated that their enrollment remained unchanged in the past five years.

All schools indicated that activities as part of school instruction were held five times a year or more. These experiences included local field trips, field trips to urban areas, computers, and guest speakers. Nearly half (47 percent) reported that the school made local field trips five times a years. An overwhelming number (98 percent) reported the students used computers daily in the school. Finally, 88 percent of the teachers reported that individualized instruction was significant to the school environment.

Although it is useful to study the data of teachers and students of one-teacher schools, it is also necessary to study the school buildings and their facilities to appreciate the school ethos. The typical building (67 percent) is between one hundred and one hundred fifty years old. The responding teachers reported a variety building conditions. Of interest are the facilities not available. For instance, 22 percent reported no storage room, 22 percent reported no kitchen area, 33 percent reported no activity room, 22 percent indicated no library room/area, 35 percent indicated no playground equipment and 28 percent indicated there were no indoor toilets at the school.

All teachers reported that the presence of high or average community support was central to the operation of the school. Forty-one percent of the schools noted that the school was used for evening or week-end activities by community clubs. And, in some cases the computer and office equipment at the school served the entire community. A significant number (70 percent) of the teachers reported high community support and thirty percent noted average support to the school.

Teachers indicated that the main reasons for the school's existence were location and community pressure. Teachers expressed a strong interest in this survey and other related analysis to this study. Eighty-five percent of the respondents agreed to a phone visit and sixty-five percent agreed to a school visit. Those who were not able to agree to either of these interviews indicated that their decision was related to a time constriction and scheduling difficulties. Admittedly these teachers do not have free time during the school day, secretarial assistance, or adequate supply (substitute) teachers.

School Strengths

Teachers indicated their school was dynamic because of the educational standards, small numbers of pupils, learning groups of different ages, and the opportunity to develop cross-curriculum teaching. Several reported that good communication between the parents and the teacher, a caring atmosphere and a wonderful ethos contributed to the strengths of the one-teacher school.

School Weaknesses

Teachers determined that weaknesses stemmed from a lack of peer group interaction and a lack of competition for bright children. Other teachers focused more on the lack of adequate staffing for the teaching of physical education, art, and music. Finally, a shortage of library materials, lack of Information Technology support and outdated facilities were teacher's concerns for the small school.

School Uniqueness

Teachers noted many unique qualities of their schools. Of interest was the publication of a community school newspaper, an interest in caring for environmental issues in the community, a close association with the local Member of Parliament and academic awards. One school reported that a former pupil currently holds the distinguished position as the chancellor of a noted American university. In addition, a school described how the students made a teacher training video for a college education program, and another reported sponsoring a foreign student to learn English..

For example, with the threat of school closure by the local council, five years ago a newly appointed teacher decided to celebrate the uniqueness of a one-teacher school. This teacher involved the local school board and community leaders. The school became actively involved in the community and was recognized through radio, television, and news coverage. By inviting the local MP to the school, giving him an honorary school membership, sponsoring a series of community clean up projects, and publishing a school community newspaper, this school has remained open and the Local Education Council now commends this schools for its fine performance and high educational profile. Now, the school faces other challenges. Because of the school's high profile, "newcomers" are choosing to move to this community, acquire large estates, and build expensive homes, in order for their children to attend this unique school. Thus, the school is growing and may need to move eventually to a larger facility, thereby losing its uniqueness and one-teacher status.

In conclusion, underlying this research was a basic question: How do one-teacher primary schools serve the students and the community? As researchers we have presented the quantitative data reported in the survey, yet we do not believe it tells the entire story. We recognize that analysis from a different perspective is necessary to reveal the ethos of the one-teacher primary school existing in the British Isles today.

Abstract

One Teacher Primary Schools in England, Scotland and Wales

Small rural one-teacher schools play a major role in the education of youth not only in America, but also in other major countries of the world. A study of one-teacher schools in the Untied States was completed last year. A companion study of one-teacher primary schools in England, Scotland and Wales is now underway. This presentation will present information on these schools regarding teachers, students, and school buildings, Contrasts between American and British schools will be discussed. The presentation will include videos and photographs.

Dr. Ivan Muse, Professor of Education, Brigham Young University
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Rural schools play a major role in the education of youth not only in America, but also in other major countries of the world.

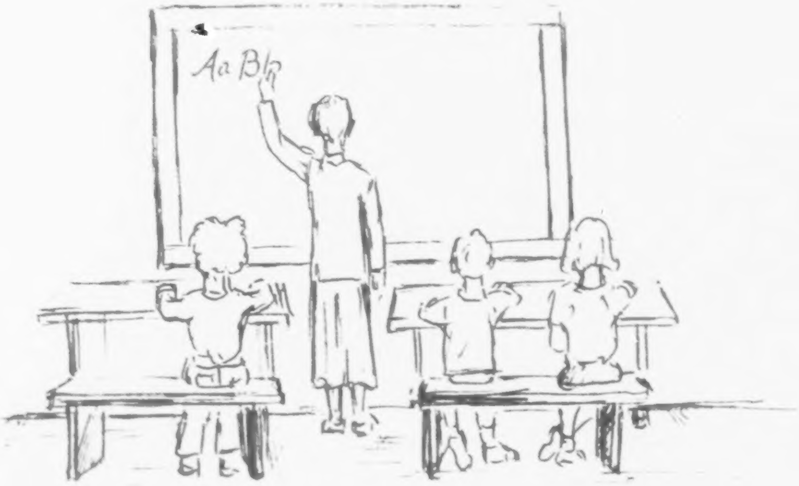
The faces of rural education:

Teacher

Student

School Buildings

Community



Location of Schools

Country	Surveyed	Identified
England	3	5
Scotland	47	53
Wales	4	5
TOTAL	54	63
Island Sch		
England	1	2
Scotland	19	25
Wales	1	1

Teachers by Age Groups

Age	Teachers by percent
21-29	0
30-39	20
40-49	43
50-59	35
60 and above	2

Total Teaching Experience

Respondent Percentages

Years	Percentage of Teachers
1 - 9	4
10 - 14	10
15 - 19	26
20 - 24	26
25 - 34	28
35+	6

Teaching
Years at Present School

Respondent Percentages

Years	At Present School
1 - 2	20
3 - 5	28
6 - 9	19
10 - 19	24
20 - 24	7
25+	2

Community Support

Teachers indicate community support for the one-teacher primary school

- 70 % high community support
- 30 % average community support

Reasons for the existence of the school

51.8 %	Location
24.2 %	Location & community pressure
18.5 %	Community pressure
3.7 %	Other
1.8 %	Funding

Highest Degree Held by Teachers of One-Teacher Schools

Percentage of Responding Teachers

Education Level	Percentage of Teachers
Certificate Only	59
Bachelor's Degree	19
Bachelor+PGCE	11
Master's Degree	11
Doctorate	0
Other	0

Occupations of Spouses

(Respondent Percentages)

Occupation	1996-97
Not married	25.9
Teacher	5.5
Agriculture	14.8
Semi-skilled or skilled	25.9
At home	5.5
School administrator	0
Self-employed	7.4
Retired	9.4
Unemployed	3.7
Widow	1.9

Distances Traveled by Teachers

Destination	Average Miles Traveled
Your school	5
Hospital	35.7
Market for major shopping	36
Secondary school	24.8
College/University	112.8
Parent's home	201.5

Enrollment Trends in One- Teacher Primary Schools

A Five Year View, 1992-1997

- 45.5 % Increased Enrollment
- 38.6 % Decreased Enrollment
- 15.9 % Enrollment unchanged

Activities as part of School Instruction

Times per year
Respondent Percents

Activities	Often (5 times)	Sometimes (3-4)	Infrequent (1-2)	Not at all
local field trips	47.2	39.6	11.3	1.9
field trips to city	8.5	30	52.1	8.5
television	83.4	7.4	7.4	1.8
computers	98	2	0	0
guest speakers	22.2	42.6	31.5	3.7
peer tutuoring	23	18.8	35.2	23
parents as aides	26.9	26.9	17.3	28.9
individualized ins	88	4	4	4
parent-teacher co	26.9	46.2	21.2	5.7

Age of School Buildings

Years	Percentage of Buildings
1-45	19.2
50-99	11.5
100-150	67.3
Over 150	2

Available Facilities in One-Teacher Schools

Percentage of Schools

Facility	Available/Adequate	Available/Inadequate	Not Available
Cloak room	72	26	2
Storage room	39	39	22
Kitchen	59	19	22
Activity room	52	15	33
Heating:			
Electric	62.9	1.8	0
Coal	1.8	0	0
Wood	0	0	0
Oil	29.9	1.8	0
Peat	1.8	0	0
Air conditioning	0	0	0
Library room/area	46	32	22
Play area	70	26	4
Playground equipment	39	26	35
Indoor toilets	57	15	28

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Preparing Rural Youth for Future Community Vitality

RURAL EDUCATION PROGRAM
NORTHWEST REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY

Beliefs about Fostering Student Success

- Hold challenging expectations for all students
- Provide a secure and nurturing environment
- Engage students in meaningful, authentic activity

RURAL EDUCATION PROGRAM
NORTHWEST REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY

Beliefs about the development of youth to assume community responsibility

- Will they leave or stay?
- Will they add to economic vitality?
- Will they assume civic and government leadership roles?
- Will they add to, detract from, or abandon quality rural life?

RURAL EDUCATION PROGRAM
NORTHWEST REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY

But What Do We Really Expect?

What future do youth hold for rural communities (and vice versa)?

- What communities say
- What parents say
- What teachers say
- What students say

RURAL EDUCATION PROGRAM
NORTHWEST REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY

Top 33 Issues Critical to Small Town Survival

#2 Employ young people

#9 Encourage civic participation

#11 Keep graduates in town

#13 Provide affordable housing for young families

#16 Encourage planning for future

#18 Support and improve schools

RURAL EDUCATION PROGRAM
NORTHWEST REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY

Rural mayors are saying that:

Keeping viable businesses, human services, local dollars, quality living environment, and efficient government is all about developing the community's existing resources,

YET...

Only 20% of northwest educators identified

> "developing the capacity in communities to meet their own needs"

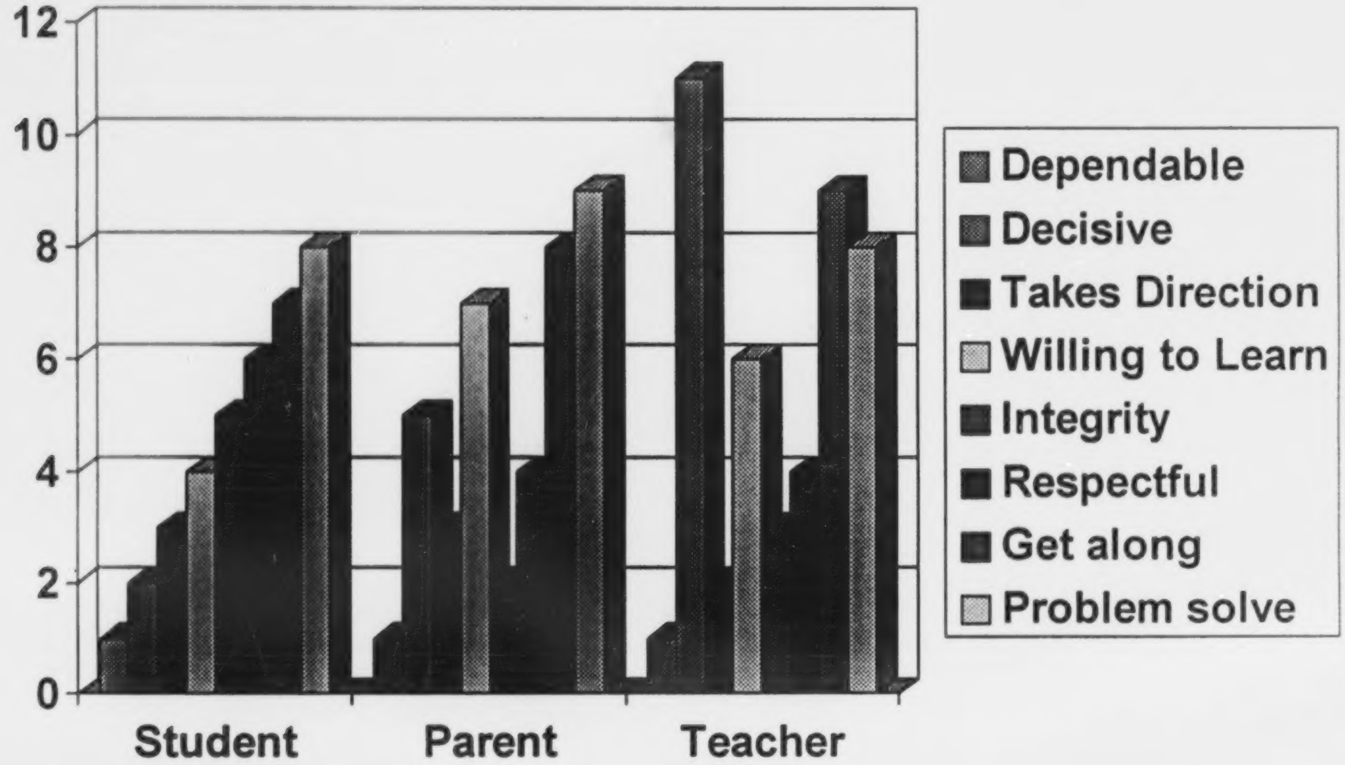
as an issue currently significant to their work in schools.

National study of rural high school student aspirations

- 21 high schools
- 2355 junior and senior students
- 789 parents
- 383 teachers

rated attributes, barriers and qualities for successful adulthood

Top 8 (of 21) Factors for Attaining Personal Goals



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And at the bottom were:

#21 Having bilingual abilities

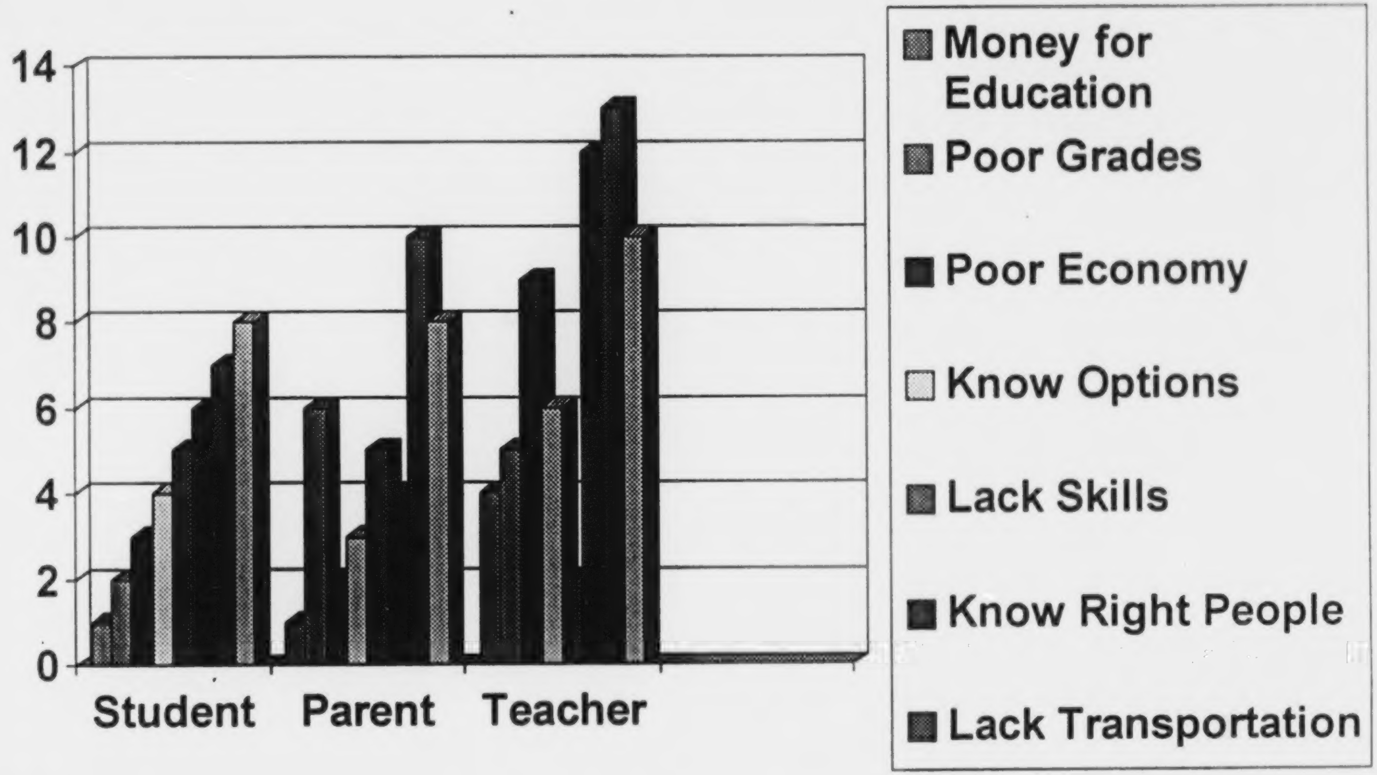
#20 Being well prepared in arts and sciences

#19 Willing to do jobs others dislike

#18 Being on task every minute

#17 Able to accept criticism

Top 8 (of 18) Barriers to Success



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"Barriers" of least concern:

#18 Sexism

#17 Parental disapproval of plans

#16 Racism

#15 Rurality

#14 Not wanting to work hard*

*But teachers ranked this #2

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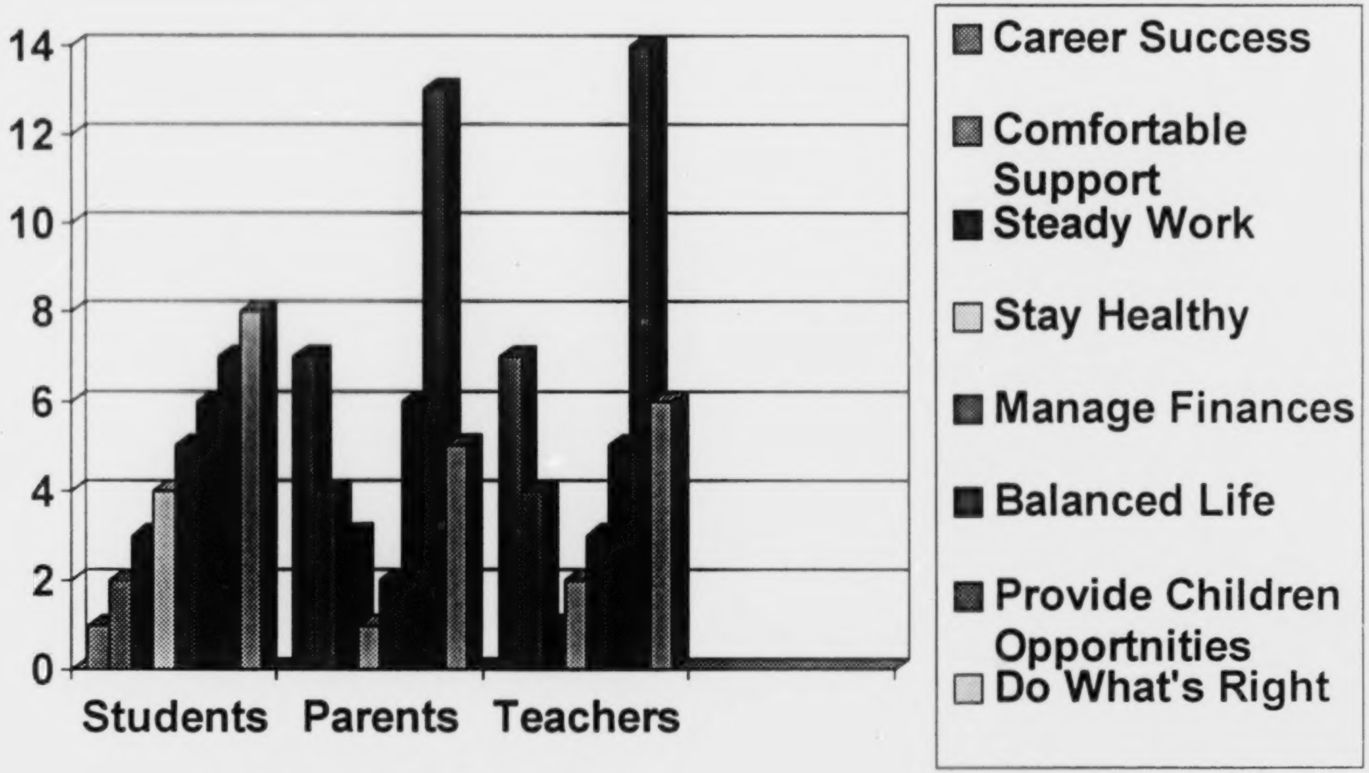
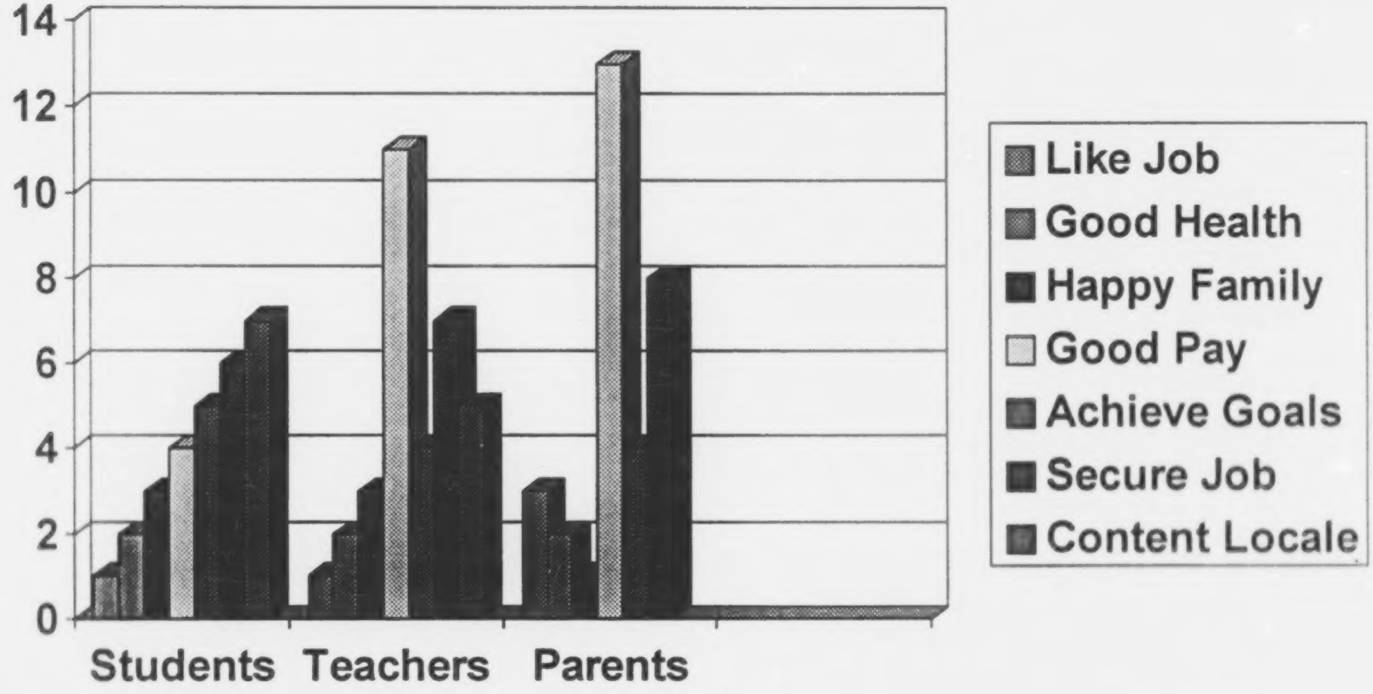
Top 8 (of 22) Conditions of Success



But at the bottom of the list were:

#22 Getting away from this area
#21 Being a leader in my community
#20 Staying connected to the land
#19 Living close to relatives
#18 Being involved in public affairs
#17 Volunteering service to community

Top 7 (of 13) Characteristics of Success



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Of less importance were:

#13 Contributing to the community
#12 Being flexible to changing lifestyle*
#11 Spiritually fulfilling life**
#10 Having close friends

*But teachers ranked this in top six
**But parents ranked this in top six

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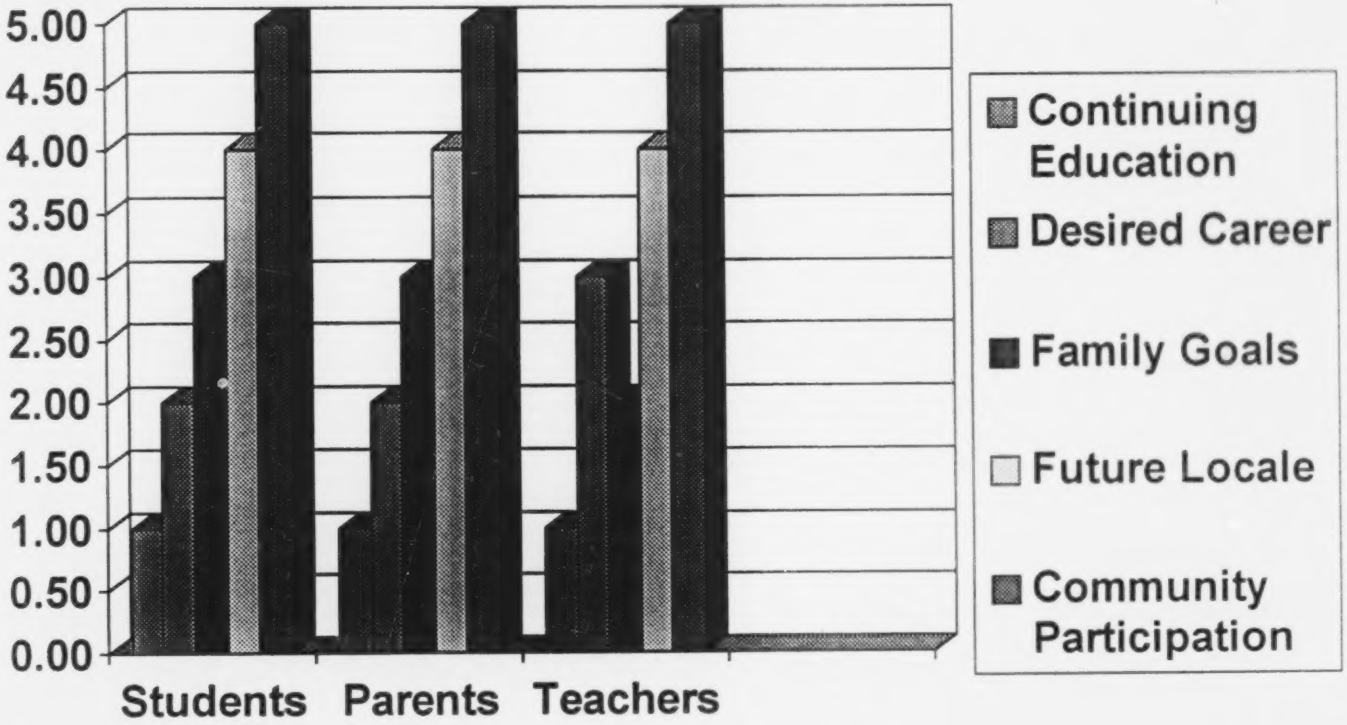
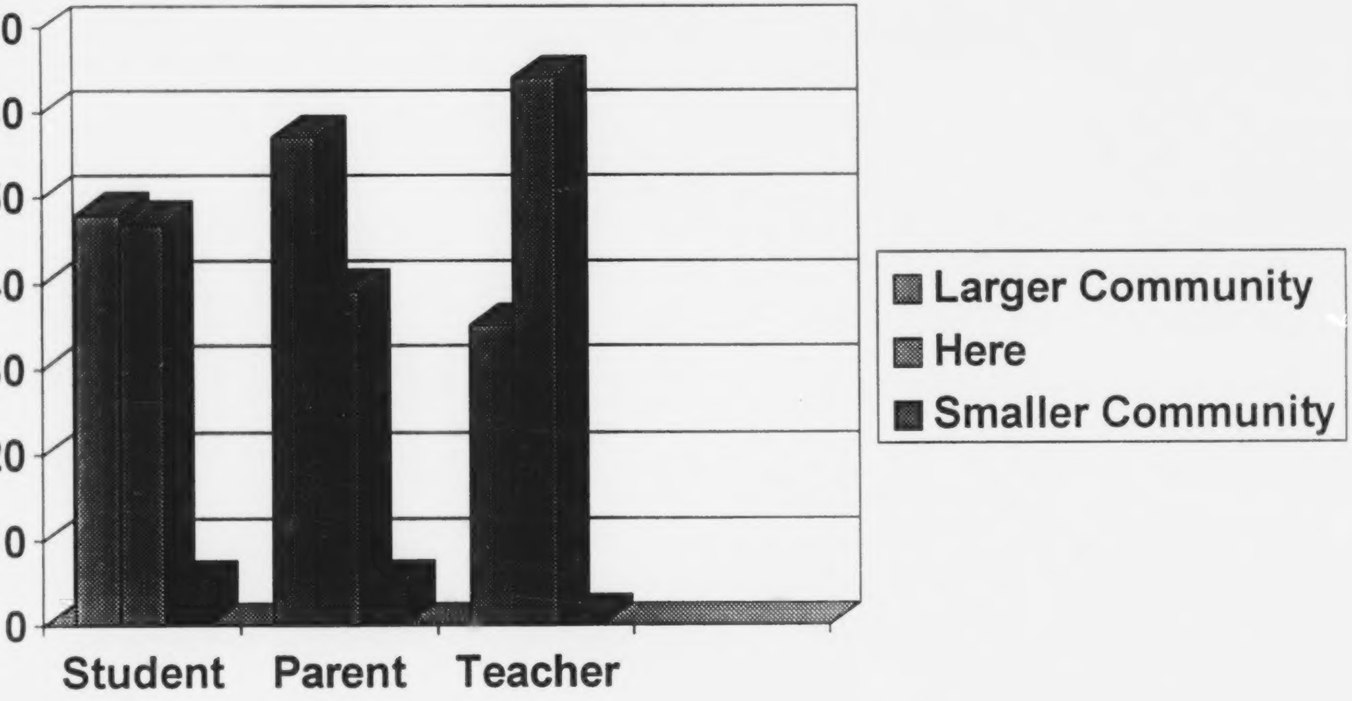
Clear Plans for Future (Rank)



Preferred Locale of Student

(Percent)



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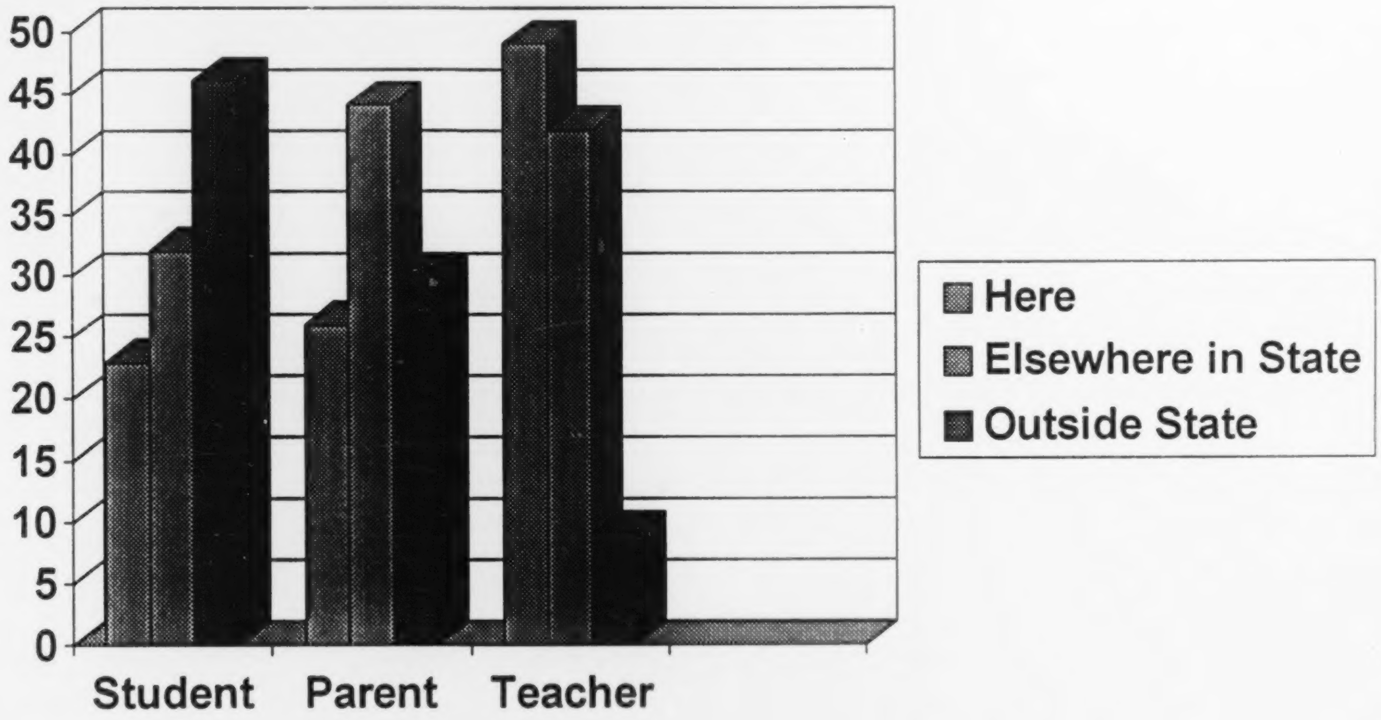
Predicted Future Locale of Student (Percent)



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The good news:

- High agreement about future of rural youth
- Strong value ascribed to character
- Clear education and career plans
- Rural setting valued by families

The bad news:

- Youth not expected to stay
- Various community leadership roles are not being considered in preparing youth
- Pessimistic teacher expectations

And the challenging news:

- School emphasis on academic content not reflected in family and community aspirations
- Community expectations for survival not reflected in school expectations--will state and national standards help or hinder rural community vitality?

ADOLESCENT STRESS, COPING, AND ACADEMIC PERSISTENCE IN RURAL APPALACHIA:

THE UNACKNOWLEDGED IMPORT OF EARLY ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY

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National Rural Education Association Research Forum
Tucson, Arizona
September 24-27, 1997

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The adolescent birthrate in the United States is higher than that in any other western, industrialized democracy (United Nations, 1995). As a result, teen pregnancy programs focusing on nominally "at-risk" adolescent females are nearly as commonplace as dropout prevention programs aimed at adolescents of both sexes (Bauch, 1994). Recent journalistic accounts have suggested that such programs may be working, citing an eight percent decline in the teen birth rate between 1991 and 1995 (Charleston [WV] Gazette, 1996: 2A).

The analysis which follows, however, suggests that the effectiveness of conventional pregnancy prevention programs may be limited in ways which typically are not recognized. Specifically, social and economic contextual factors, rather than individual and family traits, may be of primary importance in determining the incidence of adolescent pregnancy. Such contextual factors include the presence or absence of economic opportunities, and the presence or absence of communities which provide a durable sense of membership and valued participation.

In short, prudent behavior, such as avoiding adolescent pregnancy, is most likely to occur when there are organized incentives for being prudent. When opportunity and community are missing, imprudent, seemingly irrational, even recklessly self-destructive behavior, may be much more common.

This pattern of relationships between social context and behavior, between structure and agency, is not limited to one age group. Specifically, there is no reason to believe that those in early adolescence, aged 10 to 14, are less sensitive to variability in opportunity and community than those aged 15 to 19 (Everhart, 1983; Thompson, 1995). The remainder of our discussion follows from this observation, applying it to early-adolescent pregnancy in the Appalachian state of West Virginia.

ADOLESCENT AND EARLY-ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY

The literature on adolescent sexual activity and pregnancy is substantial (see, for example, Turner and Helms, 1988; Scott-Jones, 1991; Billy and Moore, 1992; Brewster, Billy, and Grady, 1993; Astroth, 1994; Luster and Small, 1994; Thompson, 1995). Almost without expception, however, published research and policy statements on adolescent pregnancy are limited to the lives and experiences of young women aged 15 to 19. Research on early-adolescent pregnancy, involving young women aged 10 to 14, has not been reported.

This is consistent with usual analyses by professional demographers, who rightly judge women's most fertile age range to be 15 to 44 (Marshall, 1994: 179-180). Nevertheless, by proceeding in this way we overlook the fact that a variety of activities and outcomes which were once limited to middle adolescence, late adolescence, and adulthood are becoming more common among younger people (Chumlea, 1982; Brough, 1990; Thompson, 1995).

METHODOLOGICAL INDIVIDUALISM

In addition, conceptual frameworks which organize research on adolescent pregnancy are typically premised on the assumptions which undergird methodological individualism (Carver and Thomas, 1995). The prevailing view, clearly, is that correlates of teen pregnancy can invariably and with little qualification be construed as characteristics of individual young women, their families, and occasionally their schools. Broader contextual factors, the socially varied circumstances of adolescence and early adolescence, are rarely acknowledged. In odd instances when contextual factors are permitted to intrude, moreover, they are typically dismissed as thoroughly tractable forces, quite capable of being controlled if only families are sufficiently functional (West Virginia Department of Health and Human Services, 1996; Bauch, 1994;

for an exemplary exception see Brewster, Billy, and Grady, 1993).

Being "At-Risk"

One conspicuous manifestation of this overweening methodological individualism is ritualistic invocation of the "at-risk" designation. This is especially conspicuous in the literature on educational research and policymaking, where uncritical application of the at-risk characterization is a tacit but ever-present denial of the importance of broader social structural factors. In sociologists' language, agency and its micro-social environment are everything; social structure counts for nothing (Ritzer, 1996: 390-425).

As a result, dropping out of school, teen pregnancy, adolescent drug abuse, all forms of juvenile delinquency and adolescent social distress -- even suicide and homicide -- are reduced to reflections of traits of individuals or characteristics of their families (Shoemaker, 1996: 47-74). Frequently cited at-risk factors of ostensibly general importance include being poor, being African-American or Hispanic, having poorly educated parents, being from a single-parent family, living in a blighted inner city, having a non-English language background, or living

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in insular rural isolation (West Virginia Kids Count Leadership Collaborative, 1996; Bernstein, 1992).

A ritualistically invoked correlate, which ostensibly mediates the association between these observable individual traits and reckless behaviors, is self-esteem (Wehlage, Rutter, Smith, Lesko, and Fernandez, 1989). It has become an article of faith that poor self-esteem links observable individual traits to self-defeating acts and outcomes. This is sometimes offered as an important reason why adolescent females are sexually vulnerable to older men (Astroth, 1994).

Being "At-risk" of Sexual Risk-Taking

In view of the foregoing, it is easy to see why conventional accounts of correlates of adolescent sexual activity and its consequences, especially adolescent pregnancy, focus on individual behaviors and family characteristics. Individual behaviors documented as being associated with sexual risk-taking include consuming alcohol, contemplating suicide, negative attitudes toward school, and low grade-point average (Luster and Small, 1994; Russell, 1994).

Family factors generally viewed as contributing to the chances of an adolescent becoming sexually active and at risk of becoming pregnant include lack of parental supervision, strained communication between the child and parents, parental rejection, and sexual or physical abuse (Luster and Small, 1994; Russell, 1994; McCullough and Scherman, 1991). In addition, low socioeconomic status is typically cited as a catalyst for stress in the home and parental nurturing problems, two factors also associated with being at-risk for early sexual activity and pregnancy.

Continuing in the same descriptively useful but atheoretical fashion, adolescents are at greater risk of becoming pregnant if they have mothers with low levels of educational attainment, come from broken homes, or frequently argue with their parents (Hayward, Grady and Billy, 1992; Russell, 1994). Sexually active adolescents from families with these characteristics are especially likely to report irregular or no contraceptive use (Luster and Small, 1994).

In addition, imprudent, perhaps self-defeating sexual behavior is often associated with other manifestations of adolsecent recklessness. Luster and Small (1994) found that sexual risk-takers -- those with multiple partners or infrequent contraceptive use -- also engaged in other risk-taking behaviors, such as smoking marijuana and consuming alcohol.

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Similarly, Harvey and Spigner (1995) report that alcohol consumption is the strongest predictor of early and more frequent sexual activity. They concluded that alcohol consumption and sexual activity are both manifestations of an underlying tendency toward sensation-seeking, risk-taking, or impulsivity.

As the foregoing suggests, adolescents who are sexually active and at risk of becoming pregnant also manifest imprudence in other ways. These impulsively irrational, even self-destructive at-risk behaviors seem to betoken a denial of interest in future prospects.

Imprudence, irrationality, recklessness -- all this sounds more like a description of a character disorder than behavior interpretable in non-pathological terms (Blau, 1993). Either that or adolescents have made an interpretably rational judgment that social circumstances demonstrate there is precious little in their futures worth safeguarding.

And this is precisely the point. By their very recklessness, adolescents may be showing that, given a reasoned judgment as to their contextually determined prospects, they have little hope for the future.

Consequently, we want to give due emphasis to social context. Rather than focusing exclusively on individual and family factors -- as if individuals and families were autonomous entities, unaffected by contextual factors -- we want to provide a much-needed antidote to methodological individualism by explicitly acknowledging environmental influences.

We want to make clear, moreover, that this same perspective informs our understanding of imprudence, recklessness, and self-destructiveness in _early_ adolescence. In this case, the same contextually determined factors which increase the likelihood of sexual risk-taking leading to pregnancy among those aged 15 to 19 have a similar effect on those aged 10 to 14.

BRINGING CONTEXT BACK IN

Our alternative to unexamined judgments as to the meaning of at-risk designations entails avoiding methodological individualism, recognizing that agency and structure are complementary rather than mutually exclusive, and trying to identify the social circumstances which make self-defeating choices more and less likely. Surely, not all young people who are poor or Black or Hispanic or who belong to a single parent family living in an isolated rural area in a low-income state are equally at-risk. What contextual factors give rise to the connections between usual at-risk traits and behaviors which seem to irrationally diminish future prospects? Why, as a case in point, do pregnancies occur more and less frequently among females aged 10 to 14?

OPPORTUNITY, COMMUNITY, AND PREGNANCY: AGES 10 TO 14

The key concepts in our alternative perspective are opportunity and community. In this view, most people, including early adolescents, behave in interpretably rational ways. Moreover, when there is reason to be so, they are self-interestedly prudent.

Discerning the interpretably rational nature of the behavior of young people and others, however, requires that we understand the cirucmstances in which they live and make life-course decisions. When economic and other opportunities are abundant and prospects for the future are good, self-destructively reckless behaviors occur less frequently. In the absence of opportunity, however, prudent foresight becomes pointless, and the incidence of seemingly reckless behaviors, such as dropping out, teen pregnancy, and violent death increases.

Similarly, prudence is unlikely to prevail in the midst of social and cultural chaos. Communities which provide every-day opportunities for valued participation in functionally significant ways in culturally stable environments are hopeful places. Young people who belong today, and who have a realistic expectation of readily assumable occupational, community, and familial roles in the future, have good reason to behave with rationally self-interested prudence. Otherwise, dropping out, teen pregnancy, and other choices inconsistent with comfortable future prospects become commonplace. Why not? Why be prudent in the absence of realistic expectations for a satisfying future?

Related Applications of Opportunity and Community

In earlier work, we applied this perspective in an effort to explain dropping out, pregnancy among women aged 15 to 19, and violent deaths among adolescents of both sexes in the same age group (see Papagiannis, Bickel, and Fuller, 1983; Bickel and Papagiannis, 1988; Bickel 1989a and 1989b; Bickel and Lange, 1995; Bickel, Weaver, Lange, and Williams, 1997; Bickel and McDonough, 1997; also see Cloward and Ohlin, 1960; Stinchcombe, 1964; Willis, 1981). The perspective has evolved, first focusing exclusively on economic and educational opportunity and the social psychological costs of going to school, and subsequently giving equal emphasis to community, both in-school and out-of-school. In addition, identification of proxy variables and ways of measuring these concepts has changed, as we have applied the perspective first to a county-level data set for Florida, and later to a county-level data set for West Virginia.

Over time, we have sought to achieve consistency in measuring our key concepts, economic opportunity, out-of-school community, and in-school community. Specifically, economic opportunity is now routinely measured with two observed variables, average job wage and average unmeployment rate. Out-of-school community is a composite variable constructed as described below, and average school size is used as a proxy for in-school community.

By specifying our regression models in the same way for different dependent variables, we are standardizing the process whereby we examine the relationships between our measures of opportunity and community, and a variety of seemingly irrational, even self-destructive behaviors. We are asking if the same set of explanatory factors -- our measures of opportunity and community, along with a common complement of controls -- account for a variety of imprudent behaviors.

The 1987 West Virginia data set we have been using facilitates our analyses because West Virginia counties and schools districts are coterminous. As a result, we have measures of aggregated social and economic variables, as well as aggregated school factors, for each county.

Ecological Inference

Clearly, our previous analyses, as well as the one reported below, are exercises in ecological inference. Varying, contextually determined levels of opportunity, out-of-school community, and in-school community must be perceived by individuals for this perspective to work.

But does anyone really believe that young people aged 10 to 14 or 15 to 19 self-consciously interrogate the contexts in which they live to gauge their quality in a systematic, rationally calculable way? Of course not. Therefore, we take this to be an experiential, largely unself-conscious process.

Early adolescents participating in everyday social settings do not systematically collect and analyze archival data on wages and unemployment, nor do they anguish over the strengths and limitations of various proxies and composites for in-school and out-of-school community. They are, nevertheless, rational actors capable of responding to commonsense, more or less valid indicators of future prospects. They perceive, more or less accurately, the structurally determined opportunities and costs, community resources and community deficiencies, which characterize their environments. They unself-consciously refer to everyday indicators of these factors when they make choices and behave in seemingly prudent or imprudent, rational or irrational ways.

DEPENDENT VARIABLE

Births per thousand females aged 10 to 14 is used as a proxy for pregnancies among unwed females in the same age range. Information concerning the latter variable is not available in the archival sources which we used to construct our data set.

By using births as a proxy for pregnancies, we unavoidably introduce measurement error in the dependent variable. After all, women who become pregnant in one geographical area may change residence and give birth in another area, and not all pregnancies result in births.

One advantage of working with a West Virginia data set, however, is that this state has the lowest rate of abortions per live births in the United States, only twelve percent (Nyden, 1994a). In addition, West Virginia's early adolescent population is largely immobile, unlikely to move from state to state or county to county (Spatig and Bickel, 1993). In these respects, the atypically rural, culturally distinctive, stay-at-home character of the state's population is helpful.

We are assuming, moreover, that measurement error in the outcome measure is random, leaving the partial regression coefficients unbiased, though their standard errors may be inflated (Gujurati, 1995). In view of the fact that we are working with the counties of just one Appalachian state, the assumption of random measurement error in the dependent variable is more plausible than otherwise might be the case (Blalock, 1982: 252-259).

In making this assumption, we are not judging West Virginia's counties to be homogenous with respect to variables of importance. If they were, variables would not vary and our research would be pointless. We are claiming, however, that in spite of pertinent and consequential differences among the state's counties, they are not so dissimilar that, for all practical purposes, they represent different social worlds (see Martinez, 1996; Bernstein, 1992).

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

As already explained, the independent variables were selected under the tentative assumption that pregnancy among early adolescent females, those aged 10 to 14, can be explained in much the same terms as adolescent pregnancy, among females aged 15 to 19. For someone in the early adolescent group, avoiding becoming pregnant can usefully be construed as a prudent investment in a valued future.

If prospects are much the same whether one becomes pregnant or not, pregnancy in early adolesccence becomes more likely.

Opportunity

In Table 1, the independent variables have been divided into five categories. The independent variables which are intended to reflect prevailing levels of economic opportunity are WAGE and UNEMPLOY. Data is taken from Woods and Poole, 1987, and West Virginia Department of Education, 1987, with age-specific teen pregnancy statistics provided by the Division of Adolescent Health, College of Education, Marshall University.

TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

In-School Community

The variable MEANSIZE, referring to average high school, middle school, and junior high school size for each district, is used as a measure of in-school community. Average school size may seem to be an unduly crude proxy for community. It is useful to recall, however, that Bryk and Thum (1989) found strong positive correlations between school size and the incidence of tracking, discipline problems, and staff absenteeism and morale. In addition, Fine (1986) and Stroughton and Grady (1978) reported that school size is directly correlated with dropout rates. This appears to be due to an enhanced sense of satisfaction and involvement in smaller schools (Bernstein, 1992).

Moreover, in our earlier work on dropouts, we found that school size interacted with student/teacher ratio such that the negative relationship between student/teacher ratio and high school completion rate became even more troublesome as school size increased (Bickel, 1989b; Bickel and Lange, 1995; also see Friedkin and Necochea, 1988). Finally, in our analysis of pregnancy in the 15 to 19 age group in West Virginia, as school size increased, the incidence of adolescent pregnancy increased as well (Bickel, Weaver, Williams, and Lange, 1997).

All things considered, school size may be a less-crude proxy for school-as-community than one might at first surmise.

Out-of-School Community

Community as a positive sense of affiliation and valued participation for early-adolescent females is not limited to school settings. In this connection it is useful to think in terms of the characteristics of traditional West Virginia communities (Bickel, Weaver, Williams, and Lange, 1997).

Geographically they have been small, rural, and isolated. Extended families have persisted. Racially and ethnically they have been homogeneous, made up almost exclusively of native-born whites. Educationally they have been marked by modest levels of attainment. College enrollment rates have been low, and vocational education has been a high school staple, though high school dropout rates have not been higher than the U.S. average (Fitzpatrick and Yoels, 1992). Most work has been in mining, manufacturing, and self-employed agriculture. Permanent migration out of the area in search of improved employment prospects, though not uncommon, has been a near-last resort response to economic necessity (Fleishman, 1994).

We have attempted to capture this dimension or continuum, with traditional community characteristics and non-traditional or modern characteristics as polar opposites, by using principal components analysis with seven variables which follow from this description of West Virgninia communities. These variables are: percentage of the district's population living in urban areas (URBAN), percentage of the district's population which is Black (BLACK), percentage of the district's population which is neither Black nor White (ETHNIC), average level of educational attainment (EDAVG), percentage of high school students enrolled in a college perparatory program (COLLPREP), percentage of students who enroll in a college or university after graduation from high school (MATRIC), and percentage of workers in service sector jobs (SERVICE) (see Bickel, Weaver, Lange, and Williams, 1997; Bickel and McDonough, 1997).

Traditional West Virginia communities would have comparatively low levels on each of these variables (Nyden, 1994a; Bormann and Mueninghoff, 1983). However, as manufacturing industries have relocated, coal mines have been mechanized, and family farms have yielded to large-scale agri-business, social relations constitutive of traditional communities have been superseded by shifting labor market relations (Lewis, Johnson, and Askins, 1978; Fleishman, 1994). The institutions and cultures of traditional communities have, in a real sense, come under siege. Such processes are typically characterized as inevitable and, for the long term, often claimed to be a desirable part of the process of becoming modern (contrast Inkeles and Smith, 1974, with Blau, 1993)

Whether or not these characterizations are accurate, areas where traditional norms, practices, and social relations no longer prevail, having been replaced by nominally modern alterntives, would be likely to have higher values on the seven variables constituting our out-of-school community composite.

If the seven variables merit interpretation as indicators of the presence or absence of traditional community characteristics, all seven would load heavily on the same principal component, and all would have the same sign (Stevens, 1993). Negative signs would correspond to the presence of traditional community characteristics. Positive signs would correspond to the absence of traditional characteristics.

TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

In Table 3, the first principal component, here labeled FACTOR 1, explains 46.4 percent of the variation in the set of variables which we are construing to be indicators of the presence or absence of traditional patterns of community social organization and composition in West Virginia counties. Further, we see that each of the seven variables loads heavily and positively on FACTOR 1.

We will rename this factor MODERN, and use it as a proxy for the decline of traditional communities -- departures from or the relative absence of out-of-school community. Consequently, we expect the incidence of early-adolescent pregnancy to vary directly with factor scores on this component (Petee and Kowalski, 1993).

The second component, labeled FACTOR 2, does not lend itself to substantive interpretation, and explains only 17.6 percent of the variation in the set of seven variables. None of the other components have eigenvalues of one or greater, and they have been deleted.

Given that the first component seems legitimately understood as representing departures from traditional patterns of community organization, while the other components explain very little of the variation in the data and are difficult to intepret without needlessly introducing ambiguity and uncertainty, we will use only the first component in subseqent analyses. This is consistent with Kennedy's (1992: 185) judgment that most of the distinctive variance in a data set is usually captured in the first principal component .

EARLY ADOLESCENCE AND PREGNANCY IN WEST VIRGINIA

In Table 4 we have used births per thousand females aged 10 to 14 in fifty-four of West Virginia's fifty-five counties as the outcome meaure. One county, Raleigh, was deleted as a speciously influential observation (see Chatterjee and Price, 1991: 86-91). The difference between the county's actual and predicted values on the dependent variable yielded a residual more than twice as large as any of the others. The independent variables with and without statistically significant regression coefficients were the same whether or not the county was included. However, the numerical values of the coefficients were attenuated, and the standard error of the estimate was inflated when the county was retained (see Lunneborg, 1994: 228-235).

All independent variables in the regression equation are defined in Table 1, with means and standard deviations reported in Table 2. Recall, however, that URBAN, BLACK, ETHNIC, EDAVG, COLLPREP, MATRIC, and SERVICE are represented in the regression analysis as one independent variable, the principal component MODERN. The independent variable MODERN, thus, is a linear composite of the original seven variables, weighted so as to maximize the sum of their squared correlations with the principal component (Dunteman, 1989).

Three of the independent variables, average job wage (WAGE), average secondary school size (MEANSIZE), and the composite variable representing departures from traditional community patterns (MODERN), work as expected. WAGE and the incidence of early adolescent pregnancy vary inversely. This is consistent with the claim that females in early adolescence who live in areas where economic opportunites are comparatively lucrative are more likely to perceive incentives to behave prudently and avoid pregnancy. When opportunities -- future prospects -- are comparatively limited, incentives to avoid early adolescent pregnancy and otherwise behave prudently are missing.

Some might argue that the relationship between the dependent variable, BRTHRATE, and the independent variable WAGE is merely a manifestation of variability in counties' socioeconomic character, and is only very tenuously related to opportunity, as we have used that concept. Notice, however, that this statistically significant relationship holds even though our regression equation contains a control for average socioeconomic status in the form of average household income (HOUSEINC). This increases the plausibility of our interpretation of the relationship between WAGE and BRTHRATE as manifesting district-to-district variability in real and preceived economic opportunity.

TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

The statistically significant and positive coefficient corresponding to MEANSIZE indicates that, from district to district, the average number of students per middle school, junior high school, and high school, and the rate of early adolescent pregnancy rise and fall together. This is consistent with the claim that, as schools become larger, they also become less able to provide a sense of valued participation in a socially and culturally stable community, and early adolescent pregnancy becomes more likely. Young women who have a valued place and positive sense of affiliation with their peers are less likely to become pregnant (Campbell and Lee, 1992).

Further, the variable MODERN, the first principal component, also has a positive and statistically significant regression coefficient. As the values of the factor scores for MODERN increase, the early adolescent birth rate, our proxy for early adolescent pregnancy, also increases. MODERN, again, represents departures from traditional patterns of community organization. Our provisional claim is that the decline of opportunities for community membership and participation, out of school as well as in school, increases the social psychological costs of everyday life while offering no compensating payoff. As we would expect, factor scores for MODERN and early adolescent birth rates rise and fall together.

LIMITATIONS

The regression coefficients corresponding to WAGE, MEANSIZE, and MODERN are consistent with our perspective on the place of opportunity and community in early adolescents' decision-making processes. However, the variable UNEMPLOY did not work as expected. While the coefficient is positive, it is not statistically significant. Bernstein (1992) reported similarly unexpected results with this variable in his Pennsylvania dropout research. What are we to make of this?

Substantively appealing concepts such as opportunity and community are often difficult to operationalize. In this instance, moreover, we are invoking these concepts as they manifest themselves in largely unself-conscious fashion in the decision-making processes of early adolescents. To complicate matters further, we are making inferences from aggregated data to individuals.

Though the UNEMPLOY variable did not give the expected results, the opportunity and community perspective still seems valuable. Our regression results, all tolled, remain compelling. We have demonstrated substantial explanatory power, and we have been able to avoid the atheoretical, exploratory empiricism of so much of the literature which follows from invocation of the at-risk designation. However, it is clear that our analysis does not tell the whole story, and remaining conceptualization, measurement, and specification problems cannot be facilely dismissed.

Nevertheless, as an alternative to explanations which ignore contextual factors, and too often result in victim-blaming, the opportunity and community perspective is quite informative. Our results are even more compelling when we recall that this same perspective, at various stages of development, has also been useful in accounting for county-to-county variability in dropouts, pregnancy among females aged 15 to 19, and violent death rates among adolescents age 15 to 19.

CAUTIONARY OBSERVATIONS

Beyond the observation that community provides a sense of affiliation and valued participation, our discussion of this concept has been largely descriptive and peculiar to West Virginia. Others have noted that community is difficult to define and is too frequently romanticized (see, for example, Blau, 1993; Bernstein, 1992). We agree that community is an easily misunderstood concept.

In the present instance, however, the characteristics of traditional communities which are most important seem clear enough: a more or less predictable, reasonably hopeful future, in a socially and culturally familiar place, where established roles are more or less readily available (see Mead, 1934: 260-273). This contrasts sharply with the "hard egotism, anonymous individualism, and narrow self-seeking" of social settings wherein traditional community relations have been superseded by impersonally modern and unpredictable labor market relations (Novak, 1978: 69).

The independent variable MATRIC, the percentage of 1987 high school graduates who enrolled in a college or university, is also troublesome. In two other research reports (Bickel, 1989b; Bickel and Lange, 1995) post-high school economic opportunities were not the only incentives which seemed to promote prudent behavior. Post-high school educational opportunites, as gauged by the variable MATRIC, also served as incentives for prudently continuing high school participation.

While the results for educational prospects were not as consistent or as strong as for economic prospects, it does seem odd that, in the present analysis, MATRIC, as a constituent of the variable MODERN, loads heavily on a composite variable which is positively related to the incidence of early adolescent pregnancy. The same was true in our earlier analysis of pregnancy among females aged 15 to 19.

This recurring anomaly may be due to a tension between educational opportunity and community in West Virginia. Specifically, we have noted that comparatively high levels of educational attainment are at odds with traditional patterns of community organization and composition. As a result, if we try to use MATRIC as a measure of educational opportunity which would work against early adolescent pregnancy, we may be overlooking the fact that this same factor is associated with increases in teen pregnancy because it is at odds with traditional community patterns.

In a sense, MATRIC could be driving teen pregnancy downward as a measure of opportunity, but driving it upward as a measure of departures from traditional community characteristics. This may explain our anomalous finding with regard to this measure of post-secondary educational opportunity.

As noted above, in our research on dropouts, the connection between high school completion and economic opportunity was stronger and more certain than the connection between high school completion and educational opportunity. The former relationship was comparatively insensitive to model re-specificiatons and was interpretably stable from one data set to another. The latter relationship was less robust and consistent. Perhaps we are beginning to see why.

Within the Appalachian state of West Virginia, economic opportunity is still tied closely to traditional mining and manufacturing jobs, and to self-employed farming. Unfortunately, the number of such jobs has declined vary sharply over the past three decades. However, where they still exist, they provide material support for those wishing to live traditional community and family lives.

When adolescents respond to educational opportunities, however, they may be doing so because traditional economic opportunities are missing, and they are preparing to leave. Those who remain behind may be living in socially and economically decimated areas.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In previous work on dropouts in Florida and West Virginia, we provisionally concluded that high school students' decisions to stay in school or to drop out were based in part on largely un-selfconscious reference to opportunities and costs of schooling. We have applied the same developing perspective, now giving the concept community an analytical role co-equal with that of opportunity, to adolescent pregnancy among women aged 15 to 19 and to violent deaths among adolescents. In the present paper, we have sought to apply this perpective to pregnancy in early adolescence, among females aged 10 to 14.

Using births to early-adolescent mothers as a proxy for pregnancies among females in the same age group, we have sought to account for county-to-county variability in this consequence of seemingly reckless behavior. We have used a data set and complement of independent variables the same as that used in earlier work on dropping out, pregnancy in the 15 to 19 age group, and violent deaths among adolescents.

Tentatively, we have concluded that the same factors which contribute to explaining dropping out, adolescent pregnancy, and violent deaths in the 15 to 19 age group also contribute to explaining pergnancy in early adolescence. Specifically, the presence or absence of accessible economic opportunities, and valued participation in a socially and culturally stable community, both in school and out of school, contribute to diminishing pregnancy in early adolescence, much as they contributed to diminishing the incidence of other forms of recklessness.

Our results are inconsistent with victim-blaming explanations which ignore structurally determined contextual factors. Futher, our findings provide additonal evidence that wildly imprudent, even self-destructive behavior may be interpretably rational: in the absence of a future, reasons for prudently safeguarding one's prospects disappear.

This suggests that conventional pregnancy prevention progams, focusing on "at-risk" inividuals, face obstacles which are not commonly appreciated. The success of such programs may be severly constrained by contextual factors, such as those discussed throughout this paper. This applies to females in the 10 to 14 age group, as well as to older adolescents.

Yes, our discussion of opportunity, community and their consequences has been limited to West Virginia, a state which is atypical even by standards which prevail in the U.S. Nevertheless, insofar as opportunity and community are social and cultural essentials, in places where early-adolescent pregnancy remains a personal and social problem, our analysis seems useful.

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Table 1

DEFINITIONS OF ALL VARIABLES

Dependent Variable

BRTHRATE	Births per thousand females aged 10 to 14, 1987.

Independent Variables

Economic Opportunities

WAGE	Average job wage in thousands of dollars.
UNEMPLOY	Average unemployment rate as a percent of the total labor force.

Postsecondary Educational Opportunities

MARTIC	Percent of 1987 high school graduates who enrolled in a college or university.

Socioeconomic Composition

HOUSEINC	Average household income in thousands of dollars.
EDAVG	Average level of educational attainment among adults age 25 or older.
URBAN	Percent of total population living in urban areas.
SERVICE	Percent labor force in service sector jobs.

Ethnic Composition

BLACK	Percent of the population that is Black.
ETHNIC	Percent of the population that is neither Black nor White.

School Characteristics

CAPREV	Local, state, and federal revenue per capita for public schools in thousands.
MEANSIZE	Average number of students per public secondary school in hundreds.
COUNKID	Number of public school counselors per thousand students.
RATIO	Student/teacher ratio.
COLLPREP	Percent of high school students in a college preparatory curriculum.
HSGRADS	High school completion rate.

Table 2

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

	Means	Standard Deviations
	Dependent Variable	
BRTHRATE	1.14	1.99
	Independent Variables	
	Economic Opportunities	
WAGE	17.11	3.89
UNEMPLOY	7.25	2.97
	Postsecondary Educational Opportunities	
MARTIC	35.30	8.36
	Socioeconomic Composition	
HOUSEINC	23.02	3.57
EDAVG	11.43	1.62
URBAN	21.44	22.18
SERVICE	54.00	20.60
	Ethnic Composition	
BLACK	1.61	2.18
ETHNIC	0.25	0.52
	School Characteristics	
CAPREV	3191.92	400.75
MEANSIZE	5.27	3.42
COUNKID	4.00	2.00
RATIO	18.54	1.66
COLLPREP	27.89	10.73
HSGRADS	80.80	12.37

Table 3

OUT-OF-SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Factor Loadings

	FACTOR 1	FACTOR 2
Percent Urban	.82	-.07
Percent Black	.55	.61
Percent Neither Black Nor White	.65	.59
Average Educational Level	.49	-.48
Percent of Students in Academic Track	.76	-.48
College Enrollment Rate	.73	-.16
Percent in Service Sector Jobs	.70	.09
Variance Explained	46.4%	17.6%

Table 4

RATES OF PRE-TEEN AND EARLY TEEN PREGNANCY PER THOUSAND AGED 10 TO 14

Unstandardized and (Standardized) Regression Coefficients

Economic Opportunities	
Average Job Wage	-0.20** (-.39)
Unemployment Rate	0.08 (.12)
Departures from Traditional Community Patterns	
Out-of-School	0.93** (.48)
In-School	0.25** (.44)
Controls for Socioeconomic Status, Gender, School Factors	
Average Household Income	0.01 (.03)
School Revenue Per Capita	-426.40 (-.09)
Counselors Per Student	-132.73 (-.11)
Student/Teacher Ratio	-0.10 (-.09)
High School Completion Rate	0.02 (.09)

R-squared=59.2%
Adjusted R-squared=48.8%

N=54!

*P<.05
**P<.01

!One county, Raleigh, was deleted as a speciously influential observation.

Age-specific pregnancy data was provided by The Division of Adolescent Health, College of Education, Marshall University, Huntington, West Virginia.

MAKING CONNECTIONS/BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS: EXAMPLES FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF MAINE

(with businesses, local schools, educational groups, and policymakers)

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A Symposium Proposal to the Annual Meeting of the National Rural Education Association
Tucson, Arizona September 1997

MAKING CONNECTIONS/BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS
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(with businesses, local schools, educational groups, and policymakers)

Abstract

The College of Education & Human Development of the University of Maine has had a decade-long commitment to participating in the development of educational policy and practice in the State of Maine. A major element of our efforts to date has been to develop initiatives that involve the many other stakeholders in public education. To that end we have sought to develop partnerships, collaboratives, professional development opportunities, and similar initiatives in the state, regionally, and nationally. The proposed symposium describes several current projects, their designs, goals, and current status.

The presenters are individuals who are playing major roles in one or more of these initiatives.

MAKING CONNECTIONS/BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS
EXAMPLES FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF MAINE
(with businesses, local schools, educational groups, and policymakers)

Maine Education Policy Research Institute

In 1995, the Maine Legislature established the Maine Education Policy Research Institute, a joint institute funded by the legislature and the University of Maine system. Under the direction of the Institute's Steering Committee, the institute is charged with developing a system for monitoring the progress of Maine K-12 public education, and for conducting policy and research studies.

Center for Research and Evaluation

The Center for Research and Evaluation is a nonprofit research unit housed in the College of Education & Human Development at the University of Maine. Since 1985, the Center has linked the College of Education to Maine's schools, communities, and public agencies to more effectively address the complex issues confronting educational systems in the state.

The Center is funded by the University of Maine and through project grants. It is administered and staffed by social science research and evaluation professionals in conjunction with College and University faculty.

The Center is an active participant in projects designed to improve school effectiveness and academic outcomes. It provides evaluation services, including fiscal, administrative, and curricular reviews. Towns and nonprofit organizations throughout Maine and Canada have contracted with the Center for school and community surveys, enrollment projections, building utilization studies, program evaluations, administrative structure reviews, financial analyses, school climate studies, and economic development studies.

To stimulate discussion and promote policy developments, the Center designs and conducts qualitative and quantitative research about school conditions and practices. It disseminates research findings through analytical reviews and bulletins, and publishes original research in the *Journal of Research in Rural Education* and in a series of occasional papers produced in conjunction with the Penquis Superintendents' Association.

The Center recently purchased software and hardware and trained personnel for providing Geographical Information Systems (GIS) models of education-related data presentation and equipment, software and hardware for the development, scanning, and analysis of machine readable surveys and questionnaires.

Penquis Superintendents' Association Research Cooperative

The research cooperative is a collaborative endeavor between the Penquis Superintendents' Association and the University of Maine's College of Education & Human Development. Through the Center for Research and Evaluation, the Cooperative prepares papers on timely educational issues that impact education in individual districts, the Penquis region and/or the state. The goal of the Cooperative is to link researchers and practitioners to meet the needs of Maine students.

National Center for Student Aspirations

The National Center for Student Aspirations is a central resource providing leadership, research, and interventions to help schools assess and respond to the perceptions and needs of all students and improve overall educational environments.

The center is grounded in more than a decade of research and direct work with rural and urban schools to assess educational conditions and to develop and implement programs that recognize and foster the aspirations of elementary, middle and high school students. Its leadership and work have been recognized and sought by schools and educational organizations around the world.

One successful program is designed to provide a consistent and meaningful experience for elementary students identified as underachieving and unmotivated that will enrich their academic, social, and personal skills in order for them to be positive, active participants in the regular classroom and beging the process of thinking about career and post-secondary experiences.

Educators from the National Center for Student Aspirations work with students in in-school and after-school programs designed to develop leadership skills. Such skills require the children to be more responsible for their own behavior and position them to perform well academically and gain greater confidence and self-worth.

UMaine/Maine Principals' Association Research Partnership

The University of Maine College of Education/Maine Principals' Association Research Partnership is a statewide collaboration committed to forging a research agenda to represent and address the needs and concerns of Maine schools. Its goal is to improve teaching and learning through research and evaluation and to document what really makes a difference in the way students learn. The partnership offers a new accessibility to University researchers that can encourage a "research mind-set" among educators and build research capacity at the local level for professional development and school improvement.

Organized in 1994, the partnership encourages and supports collaborative efforts to initiate and directly involve schools in educational research and application and to help researchers better understand and respond to real needs and issues at the building level. It represents a shared commitment of the Maine Principals' Association and the College of Education. The partnership is coordinated by the Center for Research & Evaluation, a division of the UMaine College of Education, and is guided by a steering committee of principals and College faculty.

To date, the partnership has focused on the identified issues of alternative scheduling in high schools, multi-age classrooms, inclusion, school governance and shared decision making, and the changing roles of school principals as restructuring and the growing number of administrators leaving the field impact Maine schools. The current issue being examined is challenging behavior of students that impede learning.

National Youth Sports Program

The National Youth Sports Program offers sports instruction and life skills instruction such as alcohol and other drug prevention, nutrition, personal health, and job responsibilities. NYSP also provides other direct services to participants. These include daily USDA-approved meals, accident and medical insurance for each participant and a medical examination before activities start. If a health problem is found, the child receives a medical referral. Should a participant get injured while on campus, medical help is there. All of this is provided at no cost to participants.

NYSP participants receive top-notch instruction before engaging a wide variety of sports. Swimming lessons are required at each site. Instruction also is offered in at least two other sports, including basketball, volleyball, softball, tennis, soccer, touch or flag football, dance/aerobics, track/field, golf and gymnastics.

Because the program is designed to serve youth from low-income families (90% of the participants at each site must meet U.S. poverty guidelines), the University of Maine benefits by becoming directly involved in the solution of community problems. The College works with local community-action agencies in assisting, recruiting and verifying program participants, furthering the community connection.

Maine Center for Coaching Education

Sports, Schools and Learning Results

Connecting the Contributions of Sports to School Improvement

Four Maine high schools are sites for a new program designed to strengthen the relationship between athletics and academics and formally connect the contributions of sports to educational improvement goals of each school. The focus of the project is professional development of coaches to ensure that the lessons and experiences of athletics support the local school mission and the state's performance-based expectations for students.

The project is funded by UNUM Foundation and sponsored by the Maine Center for Coaching Education and the University of Maine College of Education & Human Development.

Goals of the program are developed by each participating school based on its specific needs and mission. In general, the project assists schools:

1. Identify how their athletic programs contribute to the fulfillment of their improvement efforts and to the academic, personal and social development of students, as suggested in the Guiding Principles of the Maine Learning Results

2. Identify essential strategies coaches need to help students develop these skills and attitudes, and

3. Support coaches in effectively using these strategies

Graduate Education

The University of Maine has provided educational services and opportunities since 1865, and graduate education is a proud and distinctive tradition of the state's land-grant institution.

UMaine's graduate programs are designed to enrich and extend students' theory, practice and leadership. Since 1986, the College of Education's Graduate Outreach Program has made graduate level education available to educators throughout the state. It is an outstanding example of UMaine's tripartite mission of teaching, research, and service.

Faculty travel thousands of miles each year to personally bring quality instruction, the latest research, best practice and school-centered experience to Maine teachers who are committed to pursuing a Master's degree and applying their new knowledge and skills to be agents for change and improvement in their schools. In the process, they become more than excellent teachers; they are educational leaders.

Graduate Outreach Program

The University of Maine's Graduate Outreach Program brings the faculty to the students at regional centers around the state.

This research-based program is designed to improve the quality of instruction and learning as groups of teachers progress through graduate work relevant to their needs and those of their school.

In addition to increasing instructional skills and enhancing teachers' knowledge in various content areas, the Graduate Outreach Program provides the opportunity for teachers to study - with colleagues and faculty - the latest concepts, practices, and technological applications in educational leadership, supervision, curriculum, and school-community relations.

Professional Development Schools/Master of Arts in Teaching

The Professional Development School is a new type of institution centered on the professional development goals of teacher education programs and public schools. Essential components of a PDS are inservice professional development, preservice professional development, and systematic inquiry into issues of teaching and learning. A PDS is a learning-centered community characterized by mutual support for:

- teaching practices which enhance students' learning
- professional development for
    - university teachers
    - public school teachers
    - preservice teachers
- inquiry into questions about teaching and learning
- dissemination of new knowledge and skills

The PDS Model focuses resources on the second two years of students' University experience and allows faculty to work with more mature students with a higher level of commitment to Education as a profession. The primary goal of the PDS Model is enhanced student learning through the Professional Development of university and public school teachers and pre-service teachers. The PDS Model and other forms of University/Public School partnerships focused on professional development are common across the U.S. No two are the same!

The MAT is a research-based, graduate-level professional teacher preparation program which leads to teacher certification. The intensive 42-credit hour program provides:

- Thorough grounding in educational theory and issues
- Total immersion in methods and practice at a Professional Development School site
- Cutting-edge technology and its application in the classroom
- Extensive student teaching experience
- Supportive community of learners environment with peers, practicing teachers and faculty mentors